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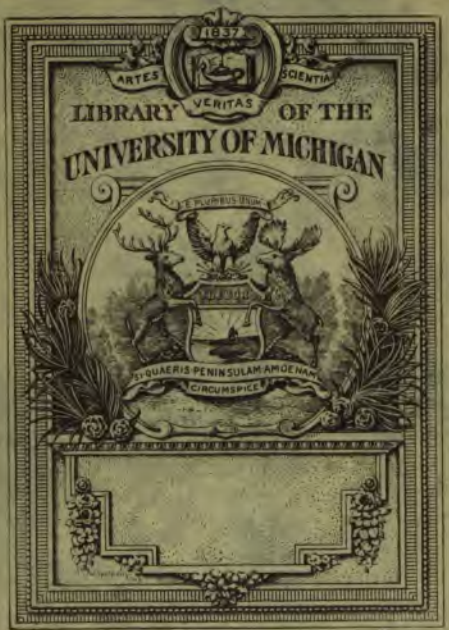
THE WAVE OF SCEPTICISM AND THE ROCK OF TRUTH

MATTHEW HENRY HALLEY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CORRECTIONS.

Title-page. *For* anima, *read* animi.

Page iv. *For* Wann Warden, *read* Wann Wurden.

,, xii. *For* one allowed, *read* one version allowed.

,, 28 line 3. *For* and that Paul, *read* and that as for Paul.

,, 52 line 3. *For* first century, *read* second century.

,, 77 *For* He suffered martyrdom on, *read* He suffered martyrdom, it is said, on.

,, 77 *For* in the amphitheatre at Antioch, *read* in the amphitheatre, not at Rome, but at Antioch.

,, 78 line 4. *For* letters, *read* versions.

,, 109 line 8 from bottom. *For* whoever, *read* whomsoever.

,, 123 line 7. *For* dead, *read* read.

,, 177 line 7. *For* at the name of Jesus, *read* in the name of Jesus.

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THE WAVE OF SCEPTICISM

AND

THE ROCK OF TRUTH.

SUUM CUIQUE

THE WAVE OF SCEPTICISM

AND

THE ROCK OF TRUTH:

A REPLY TO

"SUPERNATURAL RELIGION: AN INQUIRY INTO THE REALITY OF DIVINE REVELATION."

BY

MATTHEW HENRY HABERSHON, 1821 —

"Animus ad amplitudinem mysteriorum pro modulo suo dilatetur, non mysteria ad angustias animi constringantur."—LORD BACON.

London:
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
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MDCCCLXXV.

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"Every wave which beats against the rock of eternal truth seems to rise out of the trough caused by some receding wave, and raises its threatening crest as if it would wash away the rock.

"It is of the nature of truth, that the more it is tested the more sure it becomes under the trial. These attacks of opponents are among the means whereby fresh evidences of the certitude of the Gospels are called out."

Translator of Tischendorf's
Wann Wurden Unsere Evangelien Verfasst.

PREFACE.

THIS volume is an amplified and expanded essay read before the members of the Young Men's Society in connection with Park Church, Highbury, on the evening of the 2nd of November, 1874. The original purpose of the author was to indicate to the associates of that Christian institution how the influence of German anti-Christian literature, made plain to English readers by such books as the one under review, might be withstood and neutralised, and to supply an antidote to the poisonous insinuations respecting Christianity which many of the periodicals of the day disseminate in noticing works of this character. Those that are not

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professedly hostile to religion have a way of treating Truth and Error as if nothing had been proved, and as if the question were quite an open one whether Divine Revelation is, or is not, a reality. The present design of the author has a wider range than he first intended. He desires to induce, not only young men, but those nearer his own age, and placed, much as himself, in the great centres of business, who have not much time for research into such matters, to bring their intelligence fairly alongside the bold pretensions of the cavillers and quibblers who presume to *know* that there is no God, or that He has not spoken. He desires to remind those who are doubting that "there is a knowledge that creates doubts which nothing but a larger knowledge can satisfy," and that he who stops in the difficulty "will be perplexed and uncomfortable for life." Having investigated for himself, the author indicates the result, and would like, if he can, to facilitate

the inquiry which it is, unquestionably, the duty and interest of every one to make. If to rest on a foregone conclusion on a matter of such momentous importance is not altogether justifiable on the Christian side of the question, how much less so on the other! For it should be remembered that, on the one side, looking at the question from a *primâ facie* point of view, we have a faith which has the endorsement of the highest civilisation, the best morality, the truest culture, the noblest aspirations, and the greatest happiness which humanity has ever experienced; in contrast with a negation which has nothing to offer as a substitute, taking away the light that illumines the path of life, and leaving it in utter darkness.

As to the book under review, the anonymous author seems to regard the evidences of Supernatural Religion as a region of swamp or sand, in which solid rock is nowhere to be found upon which faith may obtain a firm footing. He

takes us in his survey here and there, and says that what seems to be solid stone is only slightly congealed sand, which, at the touch of his criticism, dissolves and falls away. We fix our attention on one of these masses, and the result is, that it is not what he alleges, but, verily, granite. If the reader who is not prejudiced against Christianity will attentively peruse this volume to the end, he will probably incline to this opinion. If any whose views in regard to Christianity are hostile should be at the trouble to read it, it is the hope of the author that the result will be to stimulate inquiry and research, for "that which is true in religion cannot be shaken, and that which is false, no one can desire to preserve." In so far as the writer of "Supernatural Religion" and others have, by their reference to early Patristic literature, shown how certain it is that Jesus lived and taught, they have done service to the cause of Christianity; for the writings, the traditions, and

the history of the Church are too closely identified with the Sermon on the Mount to admit of the probability that He who could thus teach was less than "He believed Himself to be." On such a foundation the superstructure is so appropriate, that the "possibility" which John Stuart Mill conceived is near to *probability*, and *probability* to a *full assurance of faith*.

82, ST. MARK'S SQUARE,
WEST HACKNEY, LONDON.
11th December, 1874.

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INTRODUCTION.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Shakespeare.

"When we consider further that a gift, extremely precious, came to us, which, though facilitated, was not necessitated, by what had gone before, but was due, as far as appearances go, to the peculiar mental and moral endowments of one man, and that man openly proclaimed that it did not come from himself, but from God through him, then we are entitled to say there is nothing so inherently or absolutely incredible in this supposition as to preclude any one from hoping that it may perhaps be true."

John Stuart Mill.

INTRODUCTION.

NOTHING in these days is taken for granted. In science, philosophy, politics, and religion, the foundations of belief are fearlessly examined, and the facilities for the process are unprecedented. Criticism has new and improved instruments, and they are extensively used — often misused. It concerns us especially to know how far our religious institutions are being affected.

Have devout men, during the three thousand years which history chronicles, been under a delusion in believing that "there is a spirit in man, and the Almighty giveth him understanding"?

Is popular Christianity "wide of the truth, and a disfigurement of the truth," as an eminent writer the other day asserted? Such questions float in our literature and find their way into our homes and our sanctuaries.

Although no importance is to be attached to the reckless assertion that the outworks of Evangelical Religion are in danger, and that the very citadel itself is not impregnable, it is undoubtedly true that its modern adversaries—reputable and otherwise—are bold, active, and skilful, and there is need that its defenders should be alert and vigilant. It will not do to rely altogether on the defensive lines and tactics of our predecessors. Each generation has the stronghold entrusted to its care, and new appliances are, from time to time, required to resist novel as well as resuscitated modes of assault.

However certain be the ultimate triumph of His cause whose right it is to reign, the rate of its progress depends upon the faithfulness and heroism of His servants at their various posts of labour and conflict.

To change the figure. The mirror which reflects Divine truth has to be preserved and kept bright by human instrumentality. Superstition, in the murky atmosphere of sacerdotalism, clouds it; by false philosophy it is liable to be dimmed; while crude science or unsound criticism, removing the silver lining to make the glass more transparent, makes it useless. He does well who

is able to act as its conservator, and in some measure cleanse the surface, that obscurity may be removed and eternal truth discerned.

I am aware that, as a rule, it is not desirable that hostile literature should be helped into notoriety, and that believers should be troubled with exploded fallacies and disturbed by arguments against the truth as it is in Jesus a hundred times answered.

As Robert Hall justly remarks:—"It is degrading to the dignity of a revelation, established through a succession of ages by indubitable proofs, to be adverting every moment to the hypothesis of its being an imposture, and to be inviting every ignorant sophist to wrangle about the title, when we should be cultivating the possession."

But there are exceptions to every rule, and as I am not addressing a promiscuous audience, but the members of a society whose rule is to discuss all subjects without limitation, I venture to think I am justified in bringing under your notice a recent heterodox book which is so well written as to be likely to mislead if it be not neutralized. And the more so, if I can make the author not only answer himself, but other writers whose anti-

Christian arguments are not put forth anonymously, but with the authority of well-known names and much reputation in the world of letters and science.

Let me further premise that the Christian is occupying an exceptional position when he descends to the neutral level of the sceptic to discuss the internal evidences of Evangelical truth. His usual privileged abode is more favourable for the survey than the lower ground, for the light is brighter and the air clearer on the mountain heights where he is wont to contemplate religious matters, than on the plain where faith has no temple, and reason, ignoring Divine influence, operates with the carnal instruments of a negative creed. To appeal to the spiritual discernment of a disbeliever in Divine illumination would be like expecting a man who is not of the mystical craft of the Masonic brotherhood to use the signs (if such there be) of a Freemason. Yet the argument in defence of the reality of Divine revelation is not complete without a reference to that "Spirit of Truth" which Jesus Christ promised to send "to testify of him," and to "bring all things to the remembrance" of those disciples who were to "bear

witness, because they had been with him from the beginning."[1]

A good cause may be injured by injudicious and feeble advocacy, but I trust I am not presumptuously meddling with a theme which only an erudite scholar and theologian should deal with. I beg you to bear in mind, however, that if I or others fail in the contest for truth, there still will remain the indubitable proofs of Divine revelation in all their variety and superabundance.

Although the ability, scholarship, and research displayed in this anti-Christian work are considerable, I doubt if it has really much in it that is original. The author has only cleverly reproduced and rearranged the anti-Christian arguments, chiefly German,[2] which are to be found in the library of the British Museum.

The "Examiner" says, in regard to three-fourths of the work, "It is neither more nor less than a digest of recent German speculation on the date and authorship of the Gospels; devoid of originality, and infected with the verbosity and repetition of the authorities on which it is based."

[1] John xv. 26, 27.

[2] "The works of Strauss, Baur, Schenkel, and Rénan are the great authorities for the negative criticism of the present day."—*Dr. Christlieb.*

In the other notices of the work which have appeared so far, it has, I think, been somewhat over-estimated.

The "Fortnightly Review" writes of it: "It is not too much to say of the two volumes before us that they are by far the most decisive, trenchant, and far-reaching of the direct contributions to theological controversy that have been made in this generation."

The "Athenæum" says: "The book proceeds from a man of ability, a scholar, and reasoner, who writes like an earnest seeker after truth, and knows well all the German and Dutch books relating to the criticism of the New Testament, as well as the English ones."

The "Westminster Review" asserts that "no more formidable assailant of orthodoxy could well be imagined."

The "Spectator" designates it a "masterly but prejudiced examination of the evidences for the antiquity of the Christian Scriptures."

"The Literary World" says: "This is, beyond all question, an important book. The one grand pervading fault we find with it is its partisanship. The writer plays the part of special pleader against what he calls Ecclesiastical

Christianity, and fails to represent what could be said on the other side. It is a partisan production, a piece of clever, ingenious, plausible, special pleading. The author has got up his case with marvellous exclusiveness. He makes it an absolute rule, so far as we perceive, to regard his opponents as having no case at all."

The quarterly reviews, "Edinburgh," "Quarterly," and "British Quarterly," have not yet pronounced an opinion on its merits.

My purpose is to show that the author of this anonymous work has not been successful in accomplishing the two things he has attempted, viz., to prove the *in*credibility of miracles by—

First, a recast of the often-exploded syllogistic fallacies of Hume; and, *secondly*, by an elimination of the miraculous from the Gospels; but that he has been successful, without intending it, in showing that Supernatural Religion rests upon substantial contemporary evidence.

The work consists of three parts. The first is upon miracles, treating the subject as an abstract question. The second, upon the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). The third, upon the Fourth Gospel. And there is a summary of the supposed results of the reasoning and the

investigation. The inference arrived at is premature, for as the New Testament does not consist only of the four Gospels, but contains other writings of equal importance, the argument is incomplete, and the latter will have to be dealt with before our author can reasonably expect any reader to entertain his anti-miraculous hypothesis. Another volume is promised, but we may safely venture to anticipate that it will prove no more formidable than the other great waves of scepticism which have surged against, but have not undermined, the rock upon which our faith is built.

CHAPTER I.

MIRACLES.

"Seriously to raise this question, whether God can perform miracles, would be impious if it were not absurd."

Rousseau.

CHAPTER I.

In the first part of the work the following topics are discussed by the author:—"Miracles in relation to Christianity and the order of nature—Reason in relation to the order of nature—The age of miracles—The permanent stream of miraculous pretension—Miracles in relation to ignorance and superstition."

In stating the main purpose of his inquiry, he says (p. 8):—"It is obvious that the reality of miracles is the vital point in the investigation which we have undertaken." "If the reality of miracles cannot be established, Christianity loses the only evidence by which its truth can be sufficiently attested."

He might have dispensed with his arguments against the views of those who endeavour to bring the miracles of the Bible within the scope of the laws of nature, and to modify them by explana-

tory interpretations so as to satisfy the demands of scientific and philosophical theologians.

Christianity admits of no such treatment. In its essence it is superhuman, abnormal, phenomenal, supernatural, though not unnatural. A series of facts divinely attested, a proclamation of mercy divinely commissioned, a system of means divinely blessed, is the true definition of the gospel.

Discussing the antecedent credibility of miracles, our author makes much of the references in the Bible to the working of miracles by Satanic as well as Divine agency. "If," says he, "miracles are superhuman they are not super-Satanic." The answer to this obviously is, that what was merely a superstitious notion of the Jews, and that which is taught by Divine authority, are two very different things. Where in the Bible do we find that God reveals His will by miracles which are not the manifestations of His own power? Christ points to the superhuman works that He was doing in His Father's name as evidence of His mission; and when the Jews suggested that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, He said, "If Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself: how shall his kingdom stand?"[1] The man born

[1] Matt. xii. 26.

blind, to whom sight was given, said, "If this man were not of God he could do nothing;"[1] and he said it was "a marvellous thing" that the Jews did not know *he* was from God who had wrought the miracle.

"Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, said to Jesus, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."[2] "Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"[3] "Some of the Jews said, Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"[4]

Our author's statement is certainly not supported by the passage quoted from Deuteronomy xiii. 3, of which he says, "The false miracle is here attributed to God Himself." The words of that passage are: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them: thou shalt not

[1] John ix. 33. [2] Ibid. iii. 2.
[3] Ibid. ix. 16. [4] Ibid. x. 21.

hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." I transcribe the whole passage, that its plain meaning may be seen, and you may understand how much reliance is to be placed on our author when he appears as a Bible commentator. Of course the prophet referred to is one "pretending to the Divine inspiration and authority of the prophetic office," and "the dreamer of dreams" one who pretends that some deity has spoken to him in a dream.

If our author be a Biblical scholar, his scholarship is greatly at fault in the passage he refers to in Ezekiel xiv. 9: "And if the prophet be de-

ceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel." According to the Hebrew language, God is often said to *do* a thing which He only suffers or permits. How can God be understood to harden Pharaoh's heart in any other sense? The character of God is too plainly described in the Bible to leave any uncertainty on this point.

The passages quoted from the New Testament only *apparently* support his statement. He quotes Dr. Mansel in reference to them, and no doubt his words truly apply where he says, "The supposed miracles are not true miracles at all, *i.e.*, are not the effects of Divine power, but of human deception or some other agency." The existence and powers of angels, good and bad, we know little about, because little is revealed; but it is not the Bible but superstition which teaches that the fallen spirits have more power than the faithful ones in the affairs of this world, that Satan is more potent than Gabriel. If we knew more about the origin of evil, this matter would probably be less mysterious to our finite intelligence.

Our author describes (vol. i. page 47) what he

supposes orthodox Christianity includes; and among other strange assertions he says that man was tempted into sin by Satan, "an all-powerful and persistent enemy of God," thus making the fallen angel an *Almighty* being.

This matter has an important bearing on the proper exhibition of religious truth, for the more superstition is intermingled with it, the more will unbelief be likely to be prevalent. On the one hand, infidelity engenders superstition, and on the other, superstition creates aversion to religion. I cannot but think that there is something wrong in the way in which Christian men, in the pulpit and elsewhere, often allude to the spirit of evil. He is represented in Scripture as the "god of this world," but surely that is not to be understood literally.

Jesus told the Jews that the devil was their father, as their deeds being evil indicated, who was "a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."[1] As, therefore, the devil is the father of lies, so are we to understand he is the God of this world.

[1] John viii. 44.

Not in any other sense. He is potent, but not omnipotent; knowing, but not omniscient; has his representatives distributed among the scenes of sin and death in our world, and himself goeth "to and fro in the earth,"[1] but he is not omnipresent. It is Oriental demonology which teaches that two equal principles — good and evil — are alike dominant, not "the truth as it is in Jesus;" Persian superstition, Gnostical heresy, not Divine revelation.

The frivolous use of words and matters connected with the spiritual world and our eternal interests is greatly to be disapproved and condemned; but surely the mention of Satan is not to be designated as profane, as if God's holy name were taken in vain. To comment on what are called profane oaths in such a way is not to enlighten the minds of the vulgar, but to mystify and conceal the truth of Christianity. It is one thing to believe that there is in existence the spiritual being whose evil doings our Saviour's coming into our world frustrates, whose power is great, whose emissaries are innumerable, and whose baneful suggestions and influence the Holy Spirit alone can withstand, and quite another

[1] Job i. 7.

thing to believe that Satan could give miraculous attestation to a lie, as God did to the truth. If there are some passages of Scripture that seem to favour this false view, it behoves us to suspect, having regard to the whole tenour of Scripture affecting the doctrine, that the correct interpretation has not been arrived at.

The existence of Satan, and his influence, personal, and by the legions who fell with him, are of course superhuman ideas, and in the category of the miraculous; but there is a wide difference between the most striking sign of his spiritual power and the Divine miracles wrought to attest the truth. It is God "who alone doeth great wonders." [1]

"If this man were not of God he could do nothing." [2] "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." [3]

"A miracle is a sign for our faith, to be apprehended in its Divine intention, though it cannot be comprehended, because it is God's especial work." When the magicians in the Court of Pharaoh saw the miracles which Moses wrought, they said, "This is the finger of God," [4] which

[1] Psa. cxxxvi. 14. [2] John ix. 33. [3] Ibid x. 37.
[4] Exod. viii. 19.

is, and intended to be, the inevitable inference. They knew that all they could do was a sham, a pretence.

Counterfeits are as prominent in the history of our race as any feature that could be specified, and an imaginary devil is conspicuous in the category of the spurious. If there had been no real one, the counterfeit could scarcely have been conceived. He is the father of lies, and how numerous his progeny! While all else is misrepresented, parodied, travestied, burlesqued, falsified, belied, it would be strange if he had escaped. From the Eternal Himself down to the most insignificant thing that is worth a forgery, what a catalogue may in an instant be specified! The Divine law with its ceremonial rites, and the Church with its ordinances; prophets and apostles; gospels and epistles; science and philosophy; history and biography; and, assuredly, miracles; in short, all truth—stem, branch, twig, and leaf—is more or less, and at one time or another, got up artificially, and the spurious or adulterated article offered, in competition with the genuine one, to human credulity. This, if it makes absolute truth difficult to buy, renders the injunction to "sell it not," when bought, true wisdom. It

seems to be, and of course is, absurd to doubt the genuineness of the currency of a nation because spurious coins are met with, but I believe that more scepticism is produced by the consideration of the many religious impostures in the world than by any other influence. The inference is childish in the ignorant and unphilosophical in the scholar, but it is often unconsciously arrived at in many minds as a plain and easy solution of the question which cannot be evaded—Is Divine revelation a reality?

Our author misrepresents Christianity, and uses the misrepresentation as an argument against it, as, alas! is only too common. John Stuart Mill actually says in his essay on Theism (p. 240) that "Christ is never said to have declared any evidence of His mission (unless His own interpretations of the prophecies be so considered) except internal conviction." If Mr. Mill ever read the New Testament through, he would have found where it is written, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed

is he, whosoever is not offended in me." And also the words, "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."[1] "The Jews came round about him and said, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."[2] "Believe me for the very works' sake."[3]

How, in the face of such an authoritative statement why miracles were wrought by Jesus, can our author assume that they were not intended to be an appeal to reason, and to be tested by the intelligence and common sense they appealed to? The miracles were wrought to convince men that Jesus was the Messiah, and were adapted to that end. Our author's picture of Divine revelation is very much a conception of his own, fashioned from isolated portions of Scripture, pseudo-Judaism, and ecclesiastical representations of Christianity.

He quotes Archbishop Trench, who, in defining the function of a miracle, says,—"A miracle does

[1] John v. 36. [2] Ibid x. 25. [3] Ibid xiv. 11.

not prove the truth of a doctrine or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass;" and Dr. Arnold, who says,—"It has always seemed to me that its substance is a most essential part of its evidence, and that miracles wrought in favour of what was foolish or wicked would only prove Manicheism:" which passages of fallible commentators fail to express the distinction between real miracles and spurious ones. But I ask, Why does he appeal to what Dr. Trench and Dr. Arnold, or any other commentator says, when he has before him our Saviour's own words? In arguing against miracles, it is not competent for him to put his own construction upon them in violation of the highest authority as to their purpose and design. I understand his conclusions to be against Christianity—not against what he is pleased to put in its place. It is in the Fourth Gospel we find Christ's words, but that book is too important a part of Divine revelation for any apologist to remain in the field of discussion and continue the argument if his opponent,—whether he be Mr. Mill or our author,—insists on assuming that on the Christian side the question is an open one whether the Fourth Gospel is to be accepted. The whole of the four

Gospels as we have them were read in all the Christian Churches on the three continents in the middle of the second century, as our author well knows. He acknowledges that Irenæus, who wrote about A.D. 180, compared the four Gospels to the "four columns of the Church over the whole world;" and that in writings of his which we have, and the genuineness of which no one questions, there are hundreds of references to the Gospels, the fourth included. There is no question as to this being the fact at that date. It is the earlier date that the argument bears upon. The four Gospels are held together by an inseparable bond in the archives of the Church, and believers in them assert they will all four stand or fall together. I can only suppose that it was because Mr. Mill ignored the Fourth Gospel that he ignored the verses I have quoted.

If an advocate has a weak case in hand, to damage the character of the witnesses is a well-known mode of proceeding; so our author asks who are the men who, it is asserted, saw these amazing performances? What were the intellectual conditions of the age when they occurred? "Did the Jews at the time of Jesus possess such calmness of judgment and sobriety

of imagination as to inspire us with any confidence in accounts of marvellous occurrences unwitnessed except by them, and limited to their time, which contradict all knowledge and all experience? Were their minds sufficiently enlightened and free from superstition to warrant our attaching weight to their report of events of such an astounding nature?" (Vol. i. p. 98.)

The reading of this sentence suggests a comparison between the age he refers to and the century succeeding Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, during which our Royal College of Physicians repudiated the discovery, some of the most eminent of the faculty writing against it, and creating a prejudice against Harvey by which his practice suffered considerably; and the scientific period when the French Academy for a long time rejected the use of quinine, vaccination, lightning-conductors, the steam-engine, &c.

To weaken the apostolic testimony, there is presented an elaborate exhibition of the wide-spread belief among the Jews in sorcery, dreams, portents, and numerous forms of superstition. In what age have not these been prevalent? Are we free from them in this? If the Divine communication had

been postponed until now, and civilisation could have attained to its present stage without its influence, would its reception have been any different? Would the vested interests in established usages and beliefs have raised no opposition? If there are in this country, and in this day, thousands who believe, or pretend to believe, that the priests who are ordained to forgive sins can really do so, are we in a position to assume any great superiority over the Jews, Greeks, and Romans of eighteen centuries ago? If the most manifest and stupendous miracle were wrought to show men the folly of drunkenness, lying, and other sins, would not the results be just the same? Some would believe and testify, and others say that the sign, not being of the precise sort to suit them, was not conclusive. There must be a coming down from the cross, or something else, to satisfy them. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead." The testimony of the first disciples, it is said, is not satisfactory, because they were uneducated, unscientific, uncritical. Mr. Mill says Paul was the only exception in the first generation of Christians. I remark that Matthew, in the position of a receiver of taxes for

the Roman government, though not learned, might be shrewd to detect imposture; that Thomas was not too credulous; and that Paul, if he could not judge of the value of the testimony of the hundreds of men and women who told him, or could have told him, what they were eye-witnesses of, what was his education worth, and what about the miracle in his own case? Why should it be doubted that the vision to which he refers in his unquestioned letter to the Galatians really occurred? He therein tells them (with an asseveration that, in the presence of God, he was not lying) [1] that he was taught the gospel he preached by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Whatever may be said about the authority of the Acts of the Apostles, which relates the particulars of Paul's miraculous conversion so minutely, we have the evidence of it in Paul's own letter. Of course he would compare what was revealed to him with what the eye-witnesses could tell him; and if he could mistake a sunstroke, a trance, or a state of ecstatic dreaming for a Divine revelation, his character, judged of by his own writings, is verily incomprehensible. There is no such other enigma in all history. In his equally unques-

[1] 1 Gal. i. 20.

tioned letter to the Corinthians he tells them that he received from the Lord the particulars of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Of this memorable event Paul had ample opportunities of comparing what was revealed to him with what the disciples who were present could tell him; and he was in such intercourse with them, that the circumstances were highly favourable for an educated man, such as he was, arriving at the exact and absolute truth of the matter.

Our author's view of the question is narrowed by his refusing to acknowledge that mankind is morally depraved by sin.

How a man, with the wickedness of such a city as London daily forced on his notice, and a knowledge of the history of the race in his memory, could have penned such a sentence as the following, it is difficult to conceive. "The whole theory of this abortive design of creation, with such important efforts to amend it, is emphatically contradicted by the *glorious perfection and invariability* of the order of nature." Can he not see that the degradation and wickedness of humanity are in striking *contrast* to the "glorious perfection and invariability of the order of nature"? He is bound to give some reason for this anomaly if he

will not accept what revelation makes known to us as the cause.

The abstract question as to the credibility of miracles Paul discussed in the year 58 at Cæsarea, in the presence of Festus and Agrippa, when he said, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" and it has been dealt with so exhaustively by Newton, Locke, Butler, Paley, Whateley, Olinthus Gregory, Wardlaw, Alexander, and a host of other writers, that there is really little more to be said. The "Fortnightly Review" remarks that the arguments on both sides are so familiar, that it is not necessary to reproduce the present author's mode of dealing with this part of the subject. Matthew Arnold describes it as an attempt to refute Dr. Mozley's Bampton Lecture on Miracles —"a solid reply to a solid treatise;" but that to engage in an *à priori* argument to prove that miracles are impossible, against an adversary who argues, *à priori*, that they are possible, is the vainest labour in the world. Now, as Mr. Arnold is as much a disbeliever in miracles as our author, the worth of his abstract argument may be taken at Mr. Arnold's estimate, and he says: "The author of 'Supernatural Religion' asserts again

and again that miracles are contrary to complete induction, but no such law of nature has been, or can be, established against the Christian miracles, therefore *a complete induction there is not.*"

If the miracle-disbelieving Matthew Arnold does not accept our author's abstract argument, and since we find Mr. Mill designating "*two points*" in Hume's celebrated attack as "weak" and "vulnerable," I need not linger over this part of the work. I may assume that it is sufficiently neutralised by men on his own side of the question as able and learned as himself.

But it is not only Mr. Mill and Mr. Arnold who have recently shown that Hume's celebrated argument, which our author reproduces and defends, is not sound. It is satisfactory to know that from Germany, where so much sceptical criticism has been promulgated, comes now the most complete and conclusive exposure of the whole anti-Christian argument. For the proof of this assertion I refer to a work which has just been translated into English, and issued by Messrs. T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh, entitled "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief,"[1] by Theodore

[1] A series of apologetic lectures addressed to earnest seekers after truth.

Christlieb, D.D., University Preacher and Professor of Theology at Bonn; a most able, learned, and exhaustive argument on the whole question, equal to the demands of those who desire to know all about it, and to whom I earnestly commend the book. He mentions that the great majority of the representatives of the present scientific German theology are considered to have essentially decided in favour of the faith, not only on dogmatical, but also on exegetical and speculative grounds (p. 289).

This is in strong contrast to the assertion of our author (vol. i. p. 27), that "it may broadly be said that English divines alone, at the present day, maintain the reality and supernatural character of such phenomena;" and that "the great majority of modern German critics reject the miraculous altogether, and consider the question as no longer worthy of discussion."

For the benefit of those who may not have time to read Dr. Christlieb's work, I will transcribe a few passages bearing on the abstract argument we are discussing.

"Things moral and spiritual cannot be mathematically demonstrated. He who said, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts," has intro-

duced in His words and actions a far higher logic than that whose principles Aristotle laid down." (Preface, p. xi.)

"However much, in other respects, our opponents may differ, they all agree in the denial of miracles, and unitedly storm this bulwark of the Christian faith; and in its defence we have to combat them all at once. But whence this unanimity? Because, with the truth of miracles, the entire citadel of Christianity stands or falls. For its beginning is a miracle, its Author is a miracle, its progress depends upon miracles, and miracles will hereafter be its consummation" (p. 285).

"If the principle of miracles be set aside, then all the heights of Christianity will be levelled with one stroke, and nought will remain but a heap of ruins. If we banish the supernatural from the Bible, there is nothing left us but the covers" (p. 286).

"The negation of miracles leads to the annihilation of all religion" (p. 286).

"Many are averse to the miraculous through fear of superstition, and they overlook the sharp discrimination of Scripture between belief and superstition, between miraculous power and

witchcraft. Whereas the sorcerer pretends to make supernatural powers subservient to *his* person, the prophet or apostle accounts himself only the instrument of God. It is God who alone works. The Son Himself seeks through His works not His own honour, but that of His Father.[1] Notice the unobtrusiveness of miracles in the holy Scriptures, how Christ sharply repels the vain curiosity and vulgar thirst of His age for wonders, and His prohibition of their publication. Compare with these features the sensational miracles of the Roman and Oriental Churches — images of saints who sweat blood, nod the head, roll the eyes—or the Whitsuntide marvels among the Greeks and Armenians at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost lights up candles (but not hearts), and you will confess that such feats of legerdemain and jugglery betray, in their external pomp and straining after effect, anything but a Divine origin. A glance at the internal evidences of the truth in miracles, at their moral and religious character, which reflects and serves not only the power of God, but also His truth and holiness, and must prove pre-eminently their Divine origin, will show that it is not a very

[1] John viii. 50–54.

difficult task for any one to defend his belief in the biblical miracles against the charge of superstition" (p. 297).

"Those foundation-stones for the denial of all miracles which were laid by Spinoza and Hume, and on which the critics of the present day still take a defiant stand, have crumbled away piecemeal before our eyes. Spinoza's axiom, that the 'laws of nature are the only realisation of the Divine will,' stands or falls with the pantheistic conception of the Deity—a conception which is not only unworthy of God and of man, but also contrary to reason. The Source of all freedom is supposed to have no freedom, but to be immured in His own laws! And to this Spinoza adds the conclusion: 'If anything could take place in nature contrary to its laws, God would thereby contradict Himself.' We have seen that just the converse is true, namely, that if God performed no miracles, and left the world to itself, He would contradict Himself; that He must perform miracles in order to maintain the end for which the world was created, and to bring it to the destiny which was originally intended. His miraculous action contradicts not nature and its laws, but the unnatural, which has entered the

world through sin, and counteracts its destructive consequences in order to restore the life of the world to holy order. Only those who, like Spinoza, deny the reality of sin and its destructive power, can question the necessity of the miraculous. The present condition, not only of the human world, but also of nature, gives such opinions the lie at every step" (p. 327).

"Hume, in like manner, bases his attack against the miraculous on a series of false assumptions. First: 'Miracles are violations of the laws of nature.' This is false, since miracles, far from violating, serve to re-establish the already violated order of the world, and do not injure the laws of nature. Second: 'But we learn from experience that the laws of nature are never violated.' This is false, because we ourselves immediately interfere with our higher will in the laws of nature, and interrupt them without their being violated. Third: 'For miracles we have the questionable testimony of a few persons.' This is false, because the entire Scriptures are full of miracles, and the historical testimony for them is unquestionable, since the appearance of Israel and of the Christian Church is perfectly incomprehensible without miracles.

'But,' he goes on, 'against them we have universal experience; therefore this stronger testimony nullifies the weaker and more questionable.' The pith of Hume's argument, then, is simply this: Because, according to universal experience, no miracles now take place, therefore none can ever have occurred. This proposition, in the first place, involves a begging of the question, since it is not at all certain that no miracles are performed now-a-days; and, second, it ignores the fact that different periods are subject to different laws, and with their varied wants may demand varied kinds of revelatory action on the part of God. Certainly, the negro who should affirm that there is no snow, because in his country, according to 'universal experience,' it never snows, would be committing an absurdity. And no less illegitimate is it to measure all time by the universal (?) experience or non-experience of some particular period. Finally, Hume goes on to demand, as a condition for the credibility of miracles, that they must be attested by an adequate number of sufficiently educated and honest persons, who could not be suspected of intentional deception, and that they should be done in so frequented a spot that the detection of the

illusion would be inevitable. We shall see further (in Lectures vi. and vii.) that these conditions were all essentially fulfilled in the case of the New Testament miracles. And yet, in spite of the evident weakness of Hume's argument, Strauss would have us believe that Hume's 'Essay on Miracles' is so universally convincing, that it may be said to have settled the question ('Leben Jesu,' page 148). The author of the 'Life of Christ' forgets to mention that Hume has long since been refuted in detail by the earlier and later English apologists (*e. g.*, by Campbell, Adams, Hay, Price, Douglass, Paley, Whateley, Dwight, Alexander, Wardlaw, and Pearson), to say nothing of the Germans; but then he knows that only a very small proportion of his readers is aware of this fact" (p. 328).

"To these objections not even our most modern philosophers have been able to add really new ones; and as against them all we may confidently maintain the following truths as the result of our investigation:—

"The possibility of the miraculous rests upon the uninterrupted activity of a living God in the world.

"Its necessity arises, on the one hand, from the

Divine end and aim of the world; and on the other, from the disturbance introduced into its development through sin.

"Therefore, although miracles are supernatural, they are not unnatural. Far from violating the conditions of life, of nature, or of humanity, they re-establish the life of the world which has already been deranged, and initiate the higher order of things for which the universe was created" (p. 328).

Of Baur, Dr. Christlieb writes:—

"Of all modern opponents of our old faith, the greatest is Dr. Ferdinand Christian von Baur, Professor of Theology at Tübingen (died December 2, 1860), one of the greatest, if not the greatest theological scholar of this century; after Neander, the most notable historian of the Church, not only in Germany but in the world; the most indefatigable of investigators, especially as regards the history of Primitive Christianity, in the elucidation of which he has deserved well of theology. He stands a head and shoulders above all our modern opponents of the miraculous. . . . If human power, human diligence, and acuteness, could ever bring about the overthrow of our faith, this man would have accomplished

it. But our present theology is daily becoming more convinced that he was incompetent to this task, and that, in spite of all his unutterable exertions, he did not succeed in proving the merely natural origin of Christianity. This is one of the surest signs that the rock upon which our faith is founded is absolutely indestructible" [1] (p. 505).

I must not attempt to give the points of Dr. Christlieb's critique and refutation of the Tübingen theory, but refer the reader to his invaluable work.

[1] "The Tübingen school, which has somewhat modified the views of Baur, its founder, has at present its chief seats in Switzerland, France, and Holland."—*Dr. C.*, p. 516.

CHAPTER II.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

"I consider the Gospels decidedly genuine, for they are penetrated by the reflection of a majesty which proceeded from the Person of Christ; and this is Divine, if ever Divinity appeared upon earth."

Goethe.

CHAPTER II.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

CLEMENT OF ROME—THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS —THE PASTOR OF HERMAS.

THE argument based on the investigation which is carried on in the seven hundred pages of the second and third parts of our author's work, is chiefly the negative one from "silence." He examines with great minuteness the date, character, and authorship of all the four Gospels, and refers to all the writings of the early Church for traces of them; insisting upon the silence of those early writings as being of as much importance as any "supposed allusions" to the Gospels found in such authors as Justin Martyr, Clement of Rome, and others who lived soon after the apostolic age; the result being, in our author's opinion, unfavourable to the view entertained by orthodox believers.

I demur to his conclusions. I notice a want of fairness in some of his quotations and in some of his translations, and a want of accuracy in some of his statements, as well as defects in his reasoning, which I have no doubt others will comment upon who may review the book. Some of these defects will appear as I proceed.

When I find him saying, as he does, vol. ii. page 387, "We must, however, carefully restrict ourselves to the limits of our inquiry, and resist any temptation to enter upon an exhaustive discussion of the problem presented by the Fourth Gospel from a more *general* literary point of view," I expect to find difficulties, which of course there are and must be, brought into prominence and carped at, while the general evidence upon which Divine revelation is immovably based is "carefully" avoided.

The second part, on the Synoptic Gospels, is a long investigation, extending over five hundred pages, and dealing with three and twenty works by separate non-biblical authors of the first and second centuries; and its object is to disprove that they were written solely by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and to support the hypothesis that those Gospels were not in existence until long after the

times of the apostles, and, therefore, that they furnish no evidence from eye-witnesses of the miracles they record.

The third part deals with the Fourth Gospel in a similar manner, and occupies more than two hundred pages. Our author's inquiry into the reality of Divine revelation seems, at this point, to involve the following questions: Does the extant literature of the close of the first and the beginning of the second century quote from, or allude to, the three Synoptic Gospels? And if this cannot be answered in the affirmative, does such silence prove they were not then written; and, if so, is the conclusion deducible that the miracles recorded are not credible?

In the preliminary remarks with which he opens the second part, he says: "When such writers, quoting largely from the Old Testament and other sources, deal with subjects which would naturally be assisted by references to our Gospels, and still more so by quoting such works as authoritative, and yet we find that not only *they do not show any knowledge of those Gospels*, but actually quote passages from unknown sources, or sayings of Jesus derived from tradition, the inference must be that our Gospels were either unknown, or not

recognised as works of any authority at the time." In reference to this sentence I remark that many of the passages he specifies and examines are *not* from *unknown sources*, but from the Gospels, because, if not strictly verbatim, they are in the *sense* identical, and almost identical in the language; therefore such quotations are evidence that the Gospels existed at the time. The insinuation that they are from tradition is purely conjecture, and altogether improbable, because our Gospels contain the passages. There is not the slightest reason for looking away from our Gospels, and imagining the quotations to be either from unknown sources or tradition. This will appear as we proceed. I will give in his own words the results of his examination of what he designates "evidence for the Synoptic Gospels," and then follow him step by step through the journey he takes into early Patristic Church history.

He says (vol. ii. page 248): "We may now briefly sum up the results of our examination of the evidence for the Synoptic Gospels. After having exhausted the literature and the testimony bearing on the point, we *have not found a single distinct trace of any of those Gospels during the first century and a half after the death of Jesus.* Only

once during the whole of that period do we find any tradition even that any one of our Evangelists composed a Gospel at all, and that tradition, so far from favouring our Synoptics, is fatal to the claims of the first and second. Papias, about the middle of the second century, on the occasion to which we refer, records that Matthew composed the Discourses of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue, a statement which *totally excludes the claim of our Greek Gospel to apostolic origin.* Mark, he said, wrote down from the casual preaching of Peter the sayings and doings of Jesus, but without orderly arrangement, as he was not himself a follower of the Master, and merely recorded what fell from the apostle. This description likewise shows that our actual Second Gospel could not in its present form have been the work of Mark. There is no other reference during the period to any writing of Matthew or Mark, and no mention at all of any work ascribed to Luke. If it be considered that there is any connection between Marcion's Gospel and our Third Synoptic, any evidence so derived is of an unfavourable character for that Gospel, as it involves a charge against it of being interpolated and debased by Jewish elements. Any argument for the mere existence of our Synoptics, based

upon their supposed rejection by heretical leaders and sects, has the evitable disadvantage that the very testimony which would show their existence would oppose their authenticity. There is no evidence of their use by heretical leaders, however, and no direct reference to them by any writer, heretical or orthodox, whom we have examined. We need scarcely add that no reason whatever has been shown for accepting the testimony of these Gospels as sufficient to establish the reality of miracles and of a direct Divine revelation." (Here he says, in a foot-note: "A comparison of the contents of the three Synoptics would have confirmed the conclusion, but this is not at present necessary, and we must hasten on.") "It is not pretended that more than one of the Synoptic Gospels was written by an eye-witness of the miraculous occurrences reported; and whilst no evidence has been, or can be, produced even of the historical accuracy of the narratives, no testimony as to the correctness of the inferences from the external phenomena exists or is now even conceivable. The discrepancy between the amount of evidence required and that which is forthcoming, however, is greater than under the circumstances could have been thought possible."

There is a plausibility, combined with an assumed conclusiveness, in this summary, which may impose for a moment on those readers of his book who are not conversant with the question under discussion. They will be likely to have glanced at the foot-notes indicating the great number of books referred to, and take it for granted that an author so learned and painstaking would scarcely have asserted conclusions so boldly without having found good reasons for them, which, before he has done, he will adduce and make plain. It is evident, however, that whatever his reasons may be as a whole, when his promised further volume has been published, it is quite certain that, so far, his argument from the silence of early writings, supposing he had conducted it successfully, combined with his logic on the abstract question of the credibility of miracles, is not sufficient to justify his assertion that the testimony of the Gospels is insufficient to establish the reality of miracles; because the Gospels might have existed, although no trace of them can be found in the fragments extant of books written during the few years between the composition of the Gospels and the period when they were generally acknowledged as authoritative, and

read everywhere in the Christian assemblies on the Lord's Day, that is, from about A.D. 100 to 150.

The reader will be unwise if he allow himself to be impressed by the multiplicity of selected witnesses from a selected period, other evidence being unappealed to. If a hundred of witnesses are, in a court of justice, produced to swear to the identity of a man, the impression is created that it cannot but be established. We have lately seen how far from being inevitable is such an outside verdict. The special pleading of authorship, like that of the Queen's Bench, startles and impresses for a moment; but after the investigation of all the facts and circumstances of the case is complete, and the judge has dissected the evidence, the sophistry is found not to have helped the side which used it, but has tended to strengthen the other. I remark, before following our author in his references to the witnesses he has selected for cross-examination, it is not conceded to him the right to draw a line where it best suits him in Church history, and decide the case in the absence of the evidence of witnesses on the outside of it. He draws such a line in specifying "*the first century and a half after the death of Christ.*" If the probable date of Christ's birth be the third

year before the commencement of the Christian era, we have this line drawn at A.D. 180, at which point the second generation of Christians had only just passed away, when direct tradition had not lost its freshness. While men and women were living who had heard from eye-witnesses of the events of Christ's life on earth, the story of His advent, death, resurrection, and ascension, the books recording the facts for future ages were in a less prominent position in the Church than immediately afterwards. They were then read in all the Churches, but commentaries on them and written references to them were not very numerous; therefore what we can trace of such before that time is comparatively scanty. But, immediately afterwards, in the third and fourth generation of Christians, when there were no men living who could say, My grandfather or my venerable teacher told me so and so of Christ, and he saw Christ in Galilee after His resurrection, when there were not less than five hundred of His disciples assembled, and he was present when He ascended in a cloud—while such persons were living, the testimony of a book was to them of lesser weight and importance, for they could say that they had the truth, not from the written

words of a disciple, but from his own lips. As Irenæus well remembered Polycarp, so might persons living about the middle of the first century remember the teaching of the Apostle John. The argument from "silence," applied to the early period restricted to the year 180, is for this and other reasons far from being conclusive, while the evidence furnished by such writings as those of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Hippolytus, and Origen, who belong to the subsequent years of the first and the opening of the second century, is much more important than is indicated by our author. His investigation ignores to a great extent the circumstantial evidence of this later period. He says (vol. ii. p. 387) he "must be careful to restrict himself to the limits of his inquiry," and to avoid the "more general literary point of view," and he does so restrict himself. If a person really desires to decipher an obscure antiquarian manuscript or inscription, he does not say, I must carefully keep to this imperfectly-lighted room, and not step into broad daylight.

Here is a specimen of the way he draws an inference. In arguing against the authority of the four Gospels, he says, vol. ii. p. 457, "No two

of them agree even about so simple a matter of fact as the inscription on the cross." Now the exact words, as given in each Gospel, are as follows: Matthew gives the inscription in eight words—"This is Jesus the King of the Jews;" Mark in five words—"The King of the Jews;" Luke in seven words—"This is the King of the Jews;" and John in eight words—"Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."

This needs no comment. Could anything be more natural than such slight discrepancies? Would four shorthand reporters of the present day have been more exact?

The first early writer he examines is Clement, Bishop of Rome, who, towards the close of the first century, wrote an epistle to the Corinthians. It is attached to the ancient copy of the Scriptures known as the Codex Alexandrinus, written in the fifth century, and preserved in the British Museum.

This writer's fame surpassed all others in the first century. His first Epistle to the Corinthians, written in Greek, is deemed to be genuine; but, says Dr. Mosheim, "it seems to have been corrupted and interpolated."

Eusebius assures us it was received by all, and

reverenced next to the Holy Scriptures, and therefore publicly read in the Churches for some ages, even till his time.[1]

The epistle itself makes no mention of the author's name. It purports to be addressed by "the Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." But in the Codex Alexandrinus the title of "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians" is added at the end. Internal evidence shows it was written after some persecution of the Church, either that of Nero, A.D. 64–70, or Domitian, at the end of the century. The epistle contains these words:—

"Especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, which he spake teaching gentleness and long-suffering. For thus he said, Be pitiful, that ye may be pitied; forgive, that it may be forgiven you; as ye do, so shall it be done to you; as ye give, so shall it be given to you; as ye judge, so shall it be judged to you; as ye show kindness, shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same it shall be measured to you."

Our author himself shows that these precepts

[1] "Cod." cxii. c. 38.

cannot be mere floating tradition. He says such "seems impossible" (vol. i. p. 226). They are evidently the words of Jesus taken from a written source, but he contends that they are not a quotation from the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in the Gospels as we have them, but *from some other Gospel* which is not extant. He says: "When the great difference is considered between the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke, and still more between these and the passage in Mark, it is easy to understand that that other Gospel may have contained a version differing as much from them as they do from each other."

I remark, supposing that Clement had before him all three versions, which differ from each other, what is more natural than that he should give the sense without adhering to the exact words of any. Only an inquirer who has a bias against Christianity would think of disputing the quotation.

If Epiphanius "clearly wrote without having the Gospel of Luke before him," as our author states on page 100, and if Tertullian "evidently quotes that Gospel from memory," as he also says on the same page; why should it be assumed as a matter of course that Clement had the writings before him? He also may have quoted from memory.

There is something strangely marvellous about the disappearance of these imaginary lost records of the Sermon on the Mount. We know that in the year A.D. 139 Justin Martyr wrote that the "Memoirs of the Apostles," called "Evangels" (gospels), were read after the prophets every Lord's Day in the assembly of the Christians. Where were they then? Were they identical with these memoirs called Gospels? Where were they about the year A.D. 180, when Irenæus proves that four Gospels were held in the highest esteem, and were read in all the Churches; alluding to them as the four columns of the Church, and comparing them to the four quarters of the world, the four principal winds, and the four figures of the Cherubim? Where were they when he says: "So well established *are our Gospels*, that even teachers of error themselves bear testimony to them: even they rest their objections on the foundations of the Gospels"?[1] This hypothesis of our author is certainly going out of the way to find the reason for a thing. It is to be remembered that what is evidenced by Irenæus, who wrote about A.D. 180, and was the pupil of Polycarp, is highly important. Dr. Mosheim says his five books against

[1] "Adv. Hær." iii. 11. 7.

heresies, the only writings of his extant, are a splendid monument of antiquity.[1] From the evidence of Irenæus, it is clear that the four Gospels must have been occupying a special and authoritative place in the Church some time before the time he wrote his five books on heresies, about the year 180. Tischendorf, who knows as much as any man about the Scripture manuscripts, says: "It is a well-established fact that, already between A.D. 150 and 200, not only were the Gospels translated into Latin and Syriac, but also that their number was defined to be only four, neither more nor less." The Syriac version of the New Testament called the Peshito, a work of immense value, as the language is almost identical with that spoken by Christ, a translation admirably executed, "is generally assigned," says Tischendorf, "to the end of the second century, though we have not any positive proof to offer;" and "the Latin version had acquired before this period a certain public authority." As the man who translated Irenæus's five books from Greek into Latin follows the Italic version, and as Ter-

[1] They were written while Eleutherius was Bishop of Rome (A.D. 177 to 193), as is evident from his Catalogue (Lib. iii. c. 3) of the Bishops of Rome, for Eleutherius is the last of the twelve he mentions, and was then in possession of that pastorate.

tullian, in the quotation which he makes from the Latin translation of Irenæus copies that translator, Tischendorf justly argues that some time must have elapsed between that date when the translation is known to have been in existence, and the period when they were first separated from other Church writings, and attained a prominent and sacred character. Thus we get to the apostolic age for the origin of all the four Gospels, and there seems to be no interval of time sufficient to account for our author's primitive Gospels to have disappeared, leaving no trace of their existence. It is enormously more probable that the four Gospels alluded to by Irenæus and Tertullian contained the records from which Clement quoted the passage of the Sermon on the Mount, than that there were primitive independent writings which were soon lost, obtaining no recognition when the separate Gospel manuscripts became associated with the Old Testament, and were read after them in the Christian assemblies. Our author says the passage quoted by Clement, referring to the Sermon on the Mount, is decidedly opposed to "the pretensions made on behalf of the Synoptics." I do not quite know what "pretensions" he alludes to, but I am not defending

pretensions, either ecclesiastical or non-ecclesiastical. It is not necessary, in the defence of the Gospels, to assert that the four Evangelists whose names are attached to them wrote every word; that they only contain records of what those disciples were either eye-witnesses of, or, in the case of Mark and Luke, heard Peter and Paul preach. The formulæ, "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," "according to Luke," "according to John," do not not imply that, in the most ancient opinion, these recitals were written from beginning to end by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[1] It is enough to know that the writings so far emanated from those disciples as to justify the titles they bear, and their reception by the early Church, as the true record of the important transactions to which they refer. That reception of them was sufficiently near to the date of their composition to preclude the probability that the early Christian Church had not the means of testing their genuineness or historical data, while their internal evidence is such as to confirm their truthfulness and authority.

"As to Luke," says Rénan, "doubt is scarcely possible. It is a regular composition, founded on

[1] See Rénan, "Life of Jesus," p. 8, cheap edition.

anterior documents, the work of one man, who selects, prunes, and combines. The author is certainly the same as that of the Acts of the Apostles. Now the author of the Acts is a companion of Paul, a title which applies to Luke exactly. The name of Lucus (contraction of Lucanus) being very rare, we need not fear one of those homonyms which cause so many perplexities in questions of criticism relative to the New Testament. It is beyond doubt that the author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts was a man of the second generation, and that is sufficient for our object. The date can be determined by considerations drawn from the Gospel itself. The twenty-first chapter, inseparable from the rest of the work, was certainly written a short time after the destruction of Jerusalem. We are here upon solid ground, for we are concerned with a work written entirely by the same hand, and of the most perfect unity. If the Gospel of Luke is dated, those of Matthew and Mark are dated also; for it is certain that the Third Gospel is posterior to the first two, and exhibits the character of a much more advanced composition."

"Every one drew largely on the Gospel tradition then current. The Acts of the Apostles and the

ancient Fathers quote many words of Jesus which appear authentic, and are not found in the Gospels we possess. The life of Jesus in the Synoptics rests upon two original documents—first, the discourses of Jesus collected by Matthew; second, the collection of anecdotes and personal reminiscences which Mark wrote from the recollections of Peter. We may say that we have these two documents still, mixed with accounts from another source, in the two first Gospels, which bear, not without reason, the name of the Gospel according to Matthew, and of the Gospel according to Mark. It was when tradition became weakened, in the second half of the second century, that the texts bearing the name of the apostles took a decisive authority, and obtained the force of law."

I have selected these passages from Rénan's "Life of Jesus," as they bear upon the view of the origin of the Gospels which may be entertained with consistency by those who accept their authority, without insisting upon any such pretensions as our author seems to combat, and which are not necessary for their defence.

I object also to the case being tried upon an indictment which includes a uniform, plenary,

and verbal inspiration. Nor is it, I submit, necessary to defend the view that the Old and New Testaments include no words but what are of Divine authority.

I maintain that God has supernaturally revealed His character and His will in the Bible, but I know not where the hard and fast line is which separates the human from the superhuman in our versions of these sacred documents, the general characteristic of which is that they are inspired productions; that therein "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[1] "Not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."[2]

"God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers," and having subsequently spoken by His Son, authenticates His message, which, we cannot doubt, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to record, by a special inspiration, as He did in pre-Christian times.

It is human nature for man to pervert even his best of blessings. Jews and Christians alike have done so. When we think of the translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek altering the prophetical dates, to mislead as to the coming of

[1] 2 Pet. i. 21. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 13.

Messiah, as was done in the Septuagint Version; of the genealogy of Joseph being fitted into three periods of fourteen generations each, to square with Jewish notions of numerical precision and completeness; of the verse in John's first epistle (v. 7) inserted in the text to add strength to the theological phraseology of a creed; and of the first verses of the eighth chapter of the Fourth Gospel being left out in several of the most ancient MSS., evidently owing to some great authority, such as Eusebius (who was ordered by Constantine to prepare copies of the Scriptures), having suppressed them; we cannot but be suspicious that human infirmity and meddlesomeness have, to some extent, interfered with the transmission of the Divine oracles. The fountain is undoubtedly pure, but has not the channel been polluted through which the Divine truths have been transmitted?

We have next a reference to the "Epistle of Barnabas" and the "Pastor of Hermas," both of which are attached to that ancient copy of the Scriptures known as the Codex Sinaiticus, recently found by Tischendorf, in a monastery in the desert of Sinai, and now preserved at St. Petersburg. It is the most ancient MS. of the Scriptures we

can refer to, and is supposed to have been written in the fourth century.

After the New Testament, in this valuable MS., is placed the epistle ascribed to Barnabas. It is complete. It was written some time between the year 70 and the close of the first century, and it contains these words:—"*Let us therefore beware lest we should be found as it is written, Many are called, few are chosen.*" These words certainly appear to be quoted from the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, but our author says there is a similar passage in the apocryphal book of Ezra —"*There be many created, but few shall be saved,*" and he asks us to believe it is quoted from the latter. As we have not the same bias as he has, we decline, for obvious reasons, to do so, although he points out that the verse in Matthew is not in the oldest codex. Unfortunately the one in the British Museum is defective at that part, but the verse appears in later MSS. He says, had the Epistle of Barnabas been seriously regarded as a work of the apostle of that name, it could scarcely have failed to attain canonical rank. If this be our author's opinion, there was more discrimination used by the men who decided what writings were admissible into the canon

than he has elsewhere given them credit for. The Epistle of Barnabas also contains the following important passage :—

"*But when he selected his own apostles, who should preach his gospel, who were sinners above all sin, in order that he might show that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, then he manifested himself to be the Son of God.*"

Our author says that the words "*he came not to call the righteous, but sinners,*" very probably a pious scribe added in the margin, and they were afterwards included in the text of the epistle.

I remark that this is quite a gratuitous assumption. I see no probability of anything of the kind, and I agree with Tischendorf, who asks, "Could any one mistake the words being a quotation from Matt. ix. 13?" But our author insinuates that this chapter should be dissected, and the miraculous eliminated. He says the words of Jesus, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," "evidently belong to the oldest tradition of the Gospel;" and he gives the opinion of Ewald, who ascribed them (ver. 12–14), apart from the remainder of the chapter, originally to the *collection of discourses*[1] from which, with two

[1] Spruchsammlung.

intermediate books, he considers our present Gospel of Matthew was composed.

These are the sort of conjectures upon which our author builds his argument. The ninth chapter of Matthew is too full of the miraculous to be accepted as a whole. It records how Jesus forgave sins, to the sick gave health, to the blind sight, to the dumb speech, and to the dead life; all of which is out of keeping with his bias and the German rationalism with which he has such profound sympathy.

Tischendorf finds a further analogy between the Epistle of Barnabas and the Gospel of Matthew in the words, "*David prophesied, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;*" and inquires, "Could Barnabas so write without the supposition that his readers had Matt. xxii. 4 before them? and does not such a supposition likewise infer the actual authority of Matthew's Gospel? Because the passage is in the Psalms, our author ridicules Tischendorf's inference. It is, to say the least, quite *as* probable that Barnabas quoted from the Gospel as from the Psalms, and there is propriety in Tischendorf's opinion and inference.

In designating his argument "rabid" and "pre-

posterous," our author exposes himself to arrows winged with similar feathers. When he unwarrantably pretends to *know* that the earliest records of what Jesus did and taught did not contain anything but what comports with the German school of theology which he favours, and which he has done his best to make familiar to English readers, without exposing himself personally to the odium which attaches to such opinions in a Christian community, he has no claim to indulgence from those who examine his language and animadvert thereupon.

Considering that, according to his own showing, the belief was, at all events, prevalent in the Christian Church in the middle of the second century that these writings of the apostles were authentic, and that he cannot account for their being so esteemed, so soon after the events occurred to which they refer, as to be universally read in all the Christian Churches; it is, to say the least, unbecoming in him to exalt his conjectures into oracles. Other critics, quite as inquiring, able, and learned, more modestly say, "*The subject presents a variety of embarrassing circumstances, so that it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.*" He lays himself open to be

classified with those who "*rush in where angels fear to tread.*" There is a close analogy between those who say in their hearts there is no God, and those who say He has never spoken; and we know what is said in the Bible of the former.

I will give here a specimen of the way our author quotes to suit his own argument, and you will see whether the epithet "*preposterous*" is at all applicable to him.

In showing how much John was opposed to Paul on the question of Gentile Christians observing Jewish rites, he says, "*Allusion is undoubtedly made to Paul in the Epistle to the Churches,* in the Apocalypse;" and, "*It is clear that Paul is referred to in the address to the Church of Ephesus.*" The first passage is Rev. ii. 2, "*I know thy works and thy patience, . . . and how thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them false;*" implying that John was so opposed to Paul as to deny his being an apostle, which is grossly improbable.[1] But the full absurdity of the idea is more manifest in the next quotation from Rev. ii. 14: "But I have a few things against thee because thou hast there them that hold the

[1] Paul was not living when John wrote the Apocalypse.

doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols," *&c.* It would not have answered his purpose to finish the sentence, so he stops at the word "idols," and puts "*&c.*" When I mention that the words which are represented by the "*&c.*" are "*and to commit fornication,*" you will agree with me, that not only is the idea of John saying that Paul had taught the Christians at Pergamos to sin in this respect the climax of absurdity, but that an author who quotes so unfairly, and reasons so strangely, is not to be implicitly trusted, nor his conclusions accepted. He has adopted the erroneous notion of Baur, the late eminent Professor of Theology at Tübingen, and other German writers, that the difference between the Jewish and Christian converts, in reference to circumcision and other Jewish observances, amounted to a party contest, which caused Paul and Peter and James to be seriously at variance. Now we know the facts of the temporary disagreement, and they certainly do not justify such a conclusion. The hypothesis of such a Pauline and a Petrine contest needs only to be brought into contact with the letters of Paul, in which he refers frequently to the Gentile

Churches sending help to the Jewish church at Jerusalem, and it is at once exploded. He tells the Galatians how it was arranged at Jerusalem, after the matters in dispute had been discussed, that he and Barnabas, receiving the right hand of fellowship, should go to the heathen, and James, Peter, and John to the circumcision; only the latter stipulated that the poor at Jerusalem were to be remembered, which Paul says, "I was forward to do." And he instructs the Corinthians in his first epistle as to their collections on the first day of the week before he came, that their liberality might be ready to send to the poor saints at Jerusalem. There is here the very opposite of such extreme hostile and disgraceful party feeling as must have existed if John could indulge in such language regarding Paul as our author attributes to him. There were false men, such as Simon the sorcerer; false apostles, such as Paul alludes to; and corrupters of morals, such as the Nicolaitanes; so that there is not the slightest necessity to think of Paul and his dispute about Jewish rites, to make the words of the Apocalypse intelligible.

Clement's letter, written from Rome to the Corinthians, probably about the year 94 or 95,

supplies us with evidence as to the nature of the difference between Peter and Paul, as well as proves the epistle to be genuine. He says, "Do take up the writings of the blessed apostle. What did he say to you in the beginning of the Gospel? Truly, by Divine Inspiration, he gave you directions concerning himself and Peter and Apollos, because even then ye were splitting into parties. But your party spirit at that time had less evil in it, because it was exercised in favour of apostles of eminent holiness, and of *one* much approved of by them. But now consider *who* they are that have subverted you. These are shameful things, brethren, very shameful, that the ancient and flourishing Church of Corinth have quarrelled with their pastors, from a weak partiality for one or two persons."

Clement contrasts the eminent holy Peter and Paul and Apollos with the persons who were subverting them, and the latter were undoubtedly the sort of false apostles that John alludes to in the Apocalypse. The evidence of the Second Epistle of Peter is not to be set aside because our author includes it among the questionable writings of the New Testament; and Peter there speaks of Paul as "our beloved brother, who according to the

wisdom given him hath written unto you."[1] It is not convenient for such critics to allow the letter to be genuine, on account of this very passage. But there is ample proof, from internal evidence, as shown by Dr. Macnight, Dr. Blackwell, and Dr. A. Clarke, that it is a genuine letter. What a weak case he must have in hand who has to resort to such means to defend it!

The foregone conclusion that miracles are incredible, hampers all the investigations of these German scholars, and compels them to resort to all sorts of conjectures and devices to account for things which, on the basis of Evangelical views, are neither mysterious nor inharmonious. If it be true of Germany that her ablest theologians are now exploding such fallacies, the argument of our author is one, the force of which is expended, a gun brought into the field of battle when the fight is nearly over. It may do some damage, but cannot affect materially the issue of the contest. The outspokenness of the sceptics has roused the believers, and the result, we cannot doubt, will be for the furtherance of the gospel.

"The natural and spiritual miracles of the

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 15.

sacred narrative are only the notes of a higher harmony which resound throughout the discords of earthly history. To our dull sense indeed they may seem disconnected, but the more we listen the more we perceive a connected law of higher euphony, now presaging, and finally bringing about the solution of all dissonance into an eternal harmony. Surely then a believer may look down with pity upon the spirit of the age and its declaration, that the harmony of the Kosmos is destroyed by the miracles of the Bible." (Beyschlag.)

The "Shepherd of Hermas" is next alluded to, but as it is not pretended that it contains any quotation from, or reference to, any passage of the Old or New Testament, it is simply a negative witness in this case. It is found in the Codex Sinaiticus, after the Epistle of Barnabas. The following is Mosheim's description of the work: "The book entitled the 'Shepherd of Hermas' (so called because an angel is the leading character in the drama) was composed in the second century, by Hermas, the brother of Pius, the Roman bishop. The writer, if he was indeed sane, deemed it proper to forge dialogues held with God and angels, in order to insinuate

what he regarded as salutary truths more effectually into the minds of his readers. But his celestial spirits talk more insipidly than our scavengers and porters."

What a contrast between the writings of the New Testament and those left out of the canon does such a book as this "Shepherd of Hermas" exhibit! Bunsen thus alludes to it: "That good but dull novel which Niebuhr used to say he pitied the Athenian Christians for being obliged to hear read in their meetings." "From the very dawn of Catholic literature, beginning with 'Hermas the Shepherd,' it had been the object of the Christian writers to render the Greek and Roman mind, by degrees, independent of the heathen philosophers, and to create a Catholic literature and library, more particularly for the use of children and catechumens." [1]

Failing to distinguish between what was intended to be true, what was meant to be fiction, and what was fraudulently spurious, theologians have often been misled, and important doctrines have been thereby perverted.

[1] "Hippolytus and his Age," vol. i., 315.

CHAPTER III.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS—CONTINUED.

"I cannot dispense with miracles as historical explanations of certain indubitable historical facts. I do not find that they make rents in history, but by their aid alone am I able to get over its gaping chasms."

Rothe.

CHAPTER III.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS—CONTINUED.

THE EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS—THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP—JUSTIN MARTYR—HEGESIPPUS—PAPIAS—THE CLEMENTINES—THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.

NEXT our author examines quotations in "the Epistles of Ignatius," though he says they really appertain to a very much later period, for they are "all pronounced, by a *large mass of critics, spurious compositions*." He suffered martyrdom on the 20th December, A.D. 115, when he was condemned to be cast to wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Antioch, in consequence of the fanatical excitement produced by the earthquake which took place on the thirteenth of that month.[1] If any of his fifteen letters, says our author, could

[1] While Trajan was on his Parthian expedition, and spent the winter at Antioch. (See Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," p. 370.)

be accepted as genuine, the references to them might be important. Dr. Mosheim says his whole epistles are extremely dubious. The shorter of the two letters of Ignatius is, however, generally allowed to be genuine. Tischendorf says "its genuineness is now generally admitted." In it we find, "What would a man be profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" which of course is a quotation from Matt. xvi. 26.

The next document mentioned is the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, who, Irenæus says, was in his youth a disciple of the Apostle John. He was Bishop of Smyrna, and ended his life by martyrdom, A.D. 167. Irenæus knew Polycarp personally. It is said that the epistle was written before A.D. 120. Our author ascribes it to a later date, and says that there are potent reasons for considering it spurious. As, however, Irenæus, Polycarp's disciple, believed it to be genuine, we shall take the liberty of differing from our author, and of believing it to be so. The epistle contains the following: "Remembering what the Lord said, teaching: Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you; be pitiful, that ye may be pitied; with what measure you mete it

shall be measured to you again; and that blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Also: "Beseeching in our prayers the all-seeing God not to lead us into temptation, as the Lord said, The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Also: "If, therefore, we pray the Lord that he may forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive."

Our author demurs to these being quotations from our Gospels, and says they might have been from orally current accounts of the Sermon on the Mount, or from many of the records of the teaching of Jesus in circulation.

Hegisippus is the next early writer referred to. He made use of the "Gospel according to the Hebrews." Jerome says (confirming Eusebius) "that the Gospel according to the Hebrews is written in the Chaldaic and Syriac (Syro-Chaldaic) language, but with Hebrew characters."

We have, says our author, direct intimation that Hegesippus made use of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. "He was one of the contemporaries of Justin—a Palestinian Jewish Christian. In order to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the state of the Church, he

travelled widely, and came to Rome when Anicitus was bishop. *Subsequently he wrote a work of historical memoirs in five books*, and thus became the first ecclesiastical historian of Christianity. This *work is lost*, but *portions have been preserved by Eusebius*, and one other fragment is *also extant.*" It must have been written after the succession of Eleutherius to the Roman bishopric (A.D. 177–193), as that event is mentioned in the book.

"The testimony of Hegesippus is of *great value*, not only as a man born near the primitive Christian tradition, but also as that of an intelligent traveller amongst many Christian communities" (p. 430).

Hegesippus says, in the fifth book of his Memoirs, that "these words ('Good things prepared for the righteous neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of man,' from 1 Cor. ii. 9) are vainly spoken, and that those who say these things give the lie to the Divine writings and to the Lord saying, 'Blessed are your eyes that see, and your ears that hear,'" &c. This fragment is preserved by Stephanus Gobarus, a learned monophysite of the sixth century.

"Nothing is more certain," says our author,

"than the fact that, in spite of the opportunities for collecting information afforded him by his travels through so many Christian communities, for the express purpose of such inquiry, Hegesippus *did not* find any New Testament Canon, or, that such a rule of faith did not exist in Rome in A.D. 160 and 170."

I ask, *How in the world can our author be certain of this, when only portions of Hegesippus are extant?* This applies generally to his argument that the *silence* of the early writers is of "as much importance as their supposed allusions to the Gospels." Such a mode of reasoning is aptly commented upon by the Rev. Kentish Bache, in his letter to Dr. Davidson on the Fourth Gospel. He says: "When but small portions of a work have been preserved to our use, it is no wonder that these portions should make no mention of many circumstances interesting and important, which the writer must certainly have known and told of. If I tear a few leaves from the middle of my English History book, I shall find on *them* (the few leaves) no record of the Norman Conquest or of the Battle of Waterloo. Would it thence be a fair conclusion that these events are unhistorical and fictitious?"

Papias is next referred to. He was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century, and is said to have suffered martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius, about A.D. 160–167. About the middle of the second century he wrote a work in five books, called, "Exposition of the Lord's Oracles," which is lost, excepting a few fragments preserved by Eusebius and Irenæus. We have the preface to his book, which states: "I shall not hesitate to set beside my interpretations all that I rightly learnt from the Presbyters, and rightly remembered, earnestly testifying to its truth. For I have not, like the multitude, delighted in those who spoke much, but in those who taught the truth; nor in those who recorded alien commandments, but in those who recall those delivered by the Lord to faith, and which come from truth itself. If it happened that any one came who had followed the Presbyters, I inquired minutely after the words of the Presbyters—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say; for I held that what was to be derived from books was not so profitable as that

from the living and abiding voice." "It is clear (says our author) from this that even if Papias knew any of our Gospels, he attached little or no value to them, and that he knew absolutely nothing of the Canonical Scriptures of the New Testament" (p. 445).

I remark that it is far from clear that he attached no value to our Gospels from anything he says in the fragments extant, and of course we know nothing of those portions that are lost. We know that he was making a book, consisting of what he could gather from tradition about "the truth," "to set beside his interpretations" about the "commandments delivered by the Lord to faith." There were Gospel writings in circulation, and he was supplementing what they recorded. There is positively no evidence to make us think that our present Gospels were unknown to him. He does not, in the fragments we have, mention Paul's writings, nor the Gospel of Luke, nor the Fourth Gospel, but he does allude to a book by Matthew and another by Mark, and Eusebius tells us that Papias makes use of passages taken from Peter's first epistle and John's first epistle. So, on the whole, the testimony of Papias, instead of being against is in favour of the Synoptics, and

also of the Fourth Gospel; for the silence inference applies no more to it than it does to Paul and Luke's writings, and the statement of Eusebius about John's Epistle is not to be set aside, for if John wrote it, it will be allowed he wrote the Gospel. His evidence respecting Mark is important, for the fragments contain a statement that "Mark recorded what fell from Peter, writing accurately, and taking especial care neither to omit nor to misrepresent anything;" and Papias says that "Peter preached with a view to the benefit of his hearers, and not to give a history of Christ's discourses." Our author's inference is that it is some other person of the name of Mark that is connected with the Second Gospel, and not the Mark that Papias refers to. This is very far-fetched and improbable, for the description tallies well with our Second Gospel, and quite admits of the supposition that Mark had every opportunity of obtaining from eye-witnesses the historical materials of his Gospel. No one supposes that every statement in the book emanated from Peter's discourses.

Papias is the only early writer that our author acknowledges furnishes any evidence in favour of the Synoptic Gospels. He cannot deny that he

records that Matthew composed discourses of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue, but he says "*that totally excludes the claim of our Greek Gospel to apostolic origin.*" The boldness of this assertion can only be properly met by an equally explicit denial that it does anything of the kind. If the translation be a faithful one from a Hebrew version, it is of course entitled to the epithet apostolic if the original possessed it. Our author must have some peculiar notions about verbal inspiration if this be the rule he lays down. But he altogether overlooks the supposition that Matthew's Gospel was not originally written in Hebrew, notwithstanding this statement of Papias.

Tischendorf, in his book issued by the Tract Society, entitled, "When were our Gospels Written?" maintains that the assertion of Papias "rests on a misunderstanding," and he briefly states his reasons for this view. He says: "This Hebrew text must have been lost very early, for not one even of the very oldest Church fathers had ever seen or used it." "There were two parties among the Judaisers — the one the Nazarenes and the other the Ebionites. Each of these parties used a gospel according to Matthew, the one party using a Greek and the other party a Hebrew text.

That they did not scruple to tamper with the text, to suit their creed, is probable from their very sectarian spirit. The text, as we have certain means of proving, rested upon our received text of Matthew, with, however, occasional departures, to suit their arbitrary views. When then it was reported, in later times, that these Nazarenes, who were one of the earliest Christian sects, possessed a Hebrew version of Matthew, what was more natural than that some person or other, thus falling in with the pretensions of this sect, should say that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, and that the Greek was only a version from it? How far these two texts differed from each other no one cared to inquire; and with such separatists who withdrew themselves to the shores of the Dead Sea, it would not have been easy to have attempted it."

"Jerome, who knew Hebrew, as other Latin and Greek fathers did not, obtained in the fourth century a copy of this Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes, and at once asserted that he had found the original. But when he looked more closely into the matter, he confined himself to the statement that many supposed this Hebrew text was the original of Matthew's Gospel. He

translated it into Latin and Greek, and added a few observations of his own on it. From these observations of Jerome, as well as from other fragments, we must conclude that this notion of Papias cannot be substantiated; but, on the contrary, this Hebrew has been drawn from the Greek text, and disfigured moreover here and there with certain arbitrary changes. The same is applicable to a Greek text of the Hebrew Gospel in use among the Ebionites. This text, from the fact that it was in Greek, was better known to the Church than the Hebrew version of the Nazarenes; but it was always regarded, from the earliest times, as only another text of Matthew's Gospel."

The references to Justin Martyr occupy nearly one hundred and fifty pages of the work. He was one of the most learned and one of the earliest writers of the Church not long after the apostles. His conversion took place about the year 132, and his martyrdom, A.D. 165.

In his second "Apology," A.D. 139, and in his Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew, are many quotations of passages found in the Gospels. He quotes from all the four Evangelists, and our author's elaborate attempt to prove the contrary is certainly not successful. His objection, based on slight dis-

crepancies in the words while the sense is identical, is frivolous in the extreme. Supposing there were in Justin's hands a primitive work which supplied the passages, and that work was embodied in the canonical compilation, they can be truthfully said to be quotations from the latter. The objection to his quotations on the grounds that they are not verbatim, is neutralized by the fact that neither are his quotations from the Old Testament always exact.

It has been shown that "if Justin did not quote from our Gospels, there must have been in his hands, in the second century, a variety of accounts of Christ's life, to which he, a leading Christian apologist, attached the greatest importance; and yet, in the course of the few following years, those accounts must have disappeared, and four others, of which this eminent Christian apologist knew nothing, must have taken their place. This would have been what Canon Westcott justly calls a 'revolution,' for it would have, in a single generation, entirely changed the records of the life of Christ publicly used by the Christians."[1]

Justin quotes from a book entitled the "Me-

[1] "Literary World," Oct. 23, 1874.

moirs," which he says "are called Gospels," and our author tries to make out that the passage quoted is an interpolation. It is not the only instance where the "wish," and not the proof, "is father to the thought."

In Justin's work, the "Apology," occur the words, "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;" which are found in the apocryphal Gospel of James, as said to the Virgin Mary, while in Matthew's Gospel they are spoken to Joseph. It is urged that Justin must, therefore, have quoted them from a lost Gospel; but why should it be supposed so when they are in the apocryphal Gospel of James, which, Origen says, was everywhere known about the end of the second century, and which, there is good ground for believing, was written in the early part of that century?

A few other passages in Justin's work, which are not found in our Gospels, may be accounted for by supposing them to be quotations either from lost Gospels, genuine or apocryphal, or tradition may have supplied them. There is no certain inference to be arrived at.

Justin tells us in his first "Apology" (A.D. 139), that the memoirs of the apostles called evangels

were read *after the prophets* every *Lord's Day* in the assemblies of the Christians.

This must have reference to the writings which alone, a few years later, were universally known as the Four Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles.

The second volume of the work opens with an examination of "the evidence furnished by the apocryphal religious romance generally known by the name of 'The Clementines,'" which includes the Homilies, the Recognitions, and a so-called Epitome—the Homilies and Recognitions being, he says, "the one merely a version of the other," and the Epitome a blending of the other two. As there are in the Clementine Homilies upwards of a hundred quotations of expressions of Jesus, or references to His history (not less than fifty passages from the Sermon on the Mount), it is important to ascertain, if possible, when they were written, and from what writings they quote. The date cannot be determined. The range of probability is from the middle of the second century. If much later, the inquiry does not amount to much, because we know, from ample evidence, such as that of Irenæus, that the Four Gospels as we have them were in existence, and read in the Churches, in the middle of the second

century. We presume, therefore, our author takes an early date for granted, or he would not have occupied forty pages in their examination.

The first quotation which, he says, agrees with a passage in our Synoptics, occurs in the third Homily, p. 52: "And he cried, saying, Come unto me all ye that are weary;" which agrees with Matt. xi. 28. Because the quotation is not continued, but the following words are an explanation of what "Come unto me," &c., means—"that is, who are seeking truth, and not finding it,"—we are to deem it "evident that so short and fragmentary a phrase cannot prove anything." I exclaim, Indeed! Not in a book that contains a hundred references to the words of Jesus! Not, considering that they are especially the words of Jesus, that no one else so said to the weary, "Come unto me!" Most readers will surely think the contrary should be inferred!

Among the quotations are words resembling the text of Matthew xxv. 26–30: "Thou wicked and slothful servant: thou oughtest to have put out my money with the exchangers, and at my coming I should have exacted mine own."[1] If this were the only reference to the Gospels as we

[1] "Hom." iii. 61.

have them, the quotation is sufficiently near to make the inference certain that such writings, in some shape, must have been in existence when the Clementine Homilies were written. This our author acknowledges, but he says (vol. ii. p. 17): "If the variations were the exception among a mass of quotations perfectly agreeing with the parallels in our Gospels, it might be exaggeration to base upon such divergences a conclusion that they were derived from a different source. The variations being the rule, instead of the exception, these, *however slight*, become evidence of the use of a different Gospel from ours." [1]

I remark, supposing this be so, that the author of these Homilies had, in the year 160, other Gospel manuscripts before him, it is not pretended that our Gospels contain all that was known of the sayings of Jesus, and all the events of His public ministry. We are told in the Fourth Gospel: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be

[1] "The 'Recognitions of Clemens,' which differ little from Clementina, are the witty and agreeable productions of an Alexandrian Jew, well versed in philosophy, written in the third century."—*Dr. Mosheim.*

written"[1] If the author of the Fourth Gospel did not include many things which he knew had been previously written about, why should we be surprised to find the authors of the Synoptic Gospels record only portions?

We know that Paul wrote an epistle to the Church at Laodicea, which is not preserved to us. We hold that Paul was as much an inspired writer as any of the apostles, and instead of making all sorts of difficulties about the books we have, we ought to be grateful that they are extant. We read in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

I wonder whether our author has an objection to the genuineness of the Epistle to the Colossians, because Epictetus, who was born at Hierapolis about A.D. 50, which was within a few miles of Colosse and Laodicea, and who would be likely to know, at that time, what was there going on, does not refer to Paul and the Churches there?

But it is useless to disprove the assertion that there are no quotations from the Gospels, for we

[1] John xxi. 25.

are met at every turn with the objection that those specified are probably quotations from the numerous lost Gospels known to have been in circulation. He says: "The great mass of intelligent critics are agreed that our Synoptics have assumed their present form only after repeated modifications by various editors of earlier evangelical works. The primitive Gospels have entirely disappeared, supplanted by the later and more amplified versions (p. 459). The first two Synoptics bear no author's name, because they are not the work of any one man, but the collected materials of many. The third only pretends to be a compilation for private use, and the fourth bears no simple signature, because it is neither the work of an apostle nor of an eye-witness of the events it records" (p. 401). I remark, if Luke's Gospel does only pretend to be for private use, does that affect its value? If Matthew wrote at all, and our author acknowledges he did in Hebrew, his work would be likely to be translated into Greek, either by himself or some one else, and many copies circulated. Supposing the orginal in Hebrew to be lost, it is not probable the Greek copies could be all collected from various places, and all altered and supplemented. How could

any one do this? He might write and issue a new version, but he could *not* suppress the original one unless all the existing copies were under his own control. As we have a certain work preserved, and no other, pretending to be Matthew's, it is highly probable that what Matthew contributed to the Church is that Gospel. A fictitious one would be less likely to be preserved than a real one, though we are asked to believe the contrary. Our author suggests that if we had the original writings we should find them minus the miracles, which is altogether inconsistent with what he has said about the prevalence of miraculous notions among the Jews at the time. At any rate, if the books in circulation did not relate miracles, they would not be in harmony with the gospel preached by Paul, and believed by the first Christians. Supposing that there were, as Luke intimates, and as our author asserts, many original writings, what more likely than that Matthew should collect some of them, and embody them, with his own record, in one book, under his own name? It is quite true that we meet with references to apostolic writings under other titles than those in the New Testament: we read of,—

"The Gospel according to the Hebrews."

"The Gospel according to the Egyptians."
"The Memoirs of the Apostles."
"The Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew."
"The Gospel of the Lord."
"The Discourses of Peter."
"The Collection of Discourses."

Although we do not know how these were embodied in our New Testament Scriptures, it is probable that they were in some way included, or the copies of the present Gospels may not all have uniformly borne the same titles as we know them by. In our day it is not usual for an author's name to appear in the body of his work, and often a title-page gives more than one title.[1] How few persons can give the exact title of the book known as "Butler's Analogy." The value of a book does not depend essentially upon the person who wrote it. We do not know who wrote the Book of Job, many of the Psalms, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and other portions of the Bible, but it would be unwise to reject their teaching on that account.

[1] "The 'Recognitions' are conveyed to us by the ancients under different titles. They are sometimes styled 'St. Clemens's Acts,' 'History Chronicle;' sometimes 'St. Peter's Acts,' 'Itinerary Periods,' 'Dialogues with Apion,' all which are unquestionably but different inscriptions, or it may be parcels, of the same book."—*Dr. Cave's* "Apostalici," p. 58.

Our author says: "No reason whatever has been shown for accepting the testimony of these Gospels as sufficient to establish the reality of miracles" (p. 249). I remark, the question is, Do they show such *in*sufficient testimony as to warrant the conclusion that the general evidence based on a great variety of proofs is not to be accepted?

The Epistle to Diognetus is a short composition, which has been ascribed to Justin Martyr, but its authorship is uncertain, and the date of its composition. It is not quoted or mentioned by any ancient writer. The two concluding chapters are supposed to have been written by a different hand. To the first quarter of the second half to the end of that century the date is variously assigned. It is written in pure Greek, and is elegant in style. Bunsen, in his valuable book, "Hippolytus and his Age," asserts that "the epistle is certainly the work of a contemporary of Justin the Martyr;" that he believes he has proved that the first part is a portion of the lost early Letter of Marcion, of which Tertullian speaks; and that "the very beautiful and justly admired second fragment, which in our editions of Justin's works is given at the end of that Patristic gem, the Epistle to

Diognetus,"[1] does not belong to that letter, but is the conclusion of the great work, in ten books, by Hippolytus, "The Refutation of all Heresies." Our author, in the eighteen pages devoted to the Epistle to Diognetus, says nothing of this, although it is both important and interesting. He says the supposed allusions in the Fourth Gospel may be all referable to Paul's epistles, that the date and author are unknown, and that the letter is of no evidential value. His two brief allusions to Bunsen's work show that the ignoring of that eminent man's opinion was not unintentional; while the absence of any reference to Bunsen's elaborate proof that Hippolytus wrote the "Refutation," is also significant.

[1] "Hippolytus and his Age," vol. i. 187.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS—CONTINUED.

"It remains a possibility that Christ actually was what He supposed Himself to be."

John Stuart Mill.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS—CONTINUED.

BASILIDES — VALENTINUS — MARCION — TATIAN — DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH — MELITO OF SARDIS — CLAUDIUS APOLLINARIS — ATHENAGORAS — EPISTLE OF VIENNE AND LYONS — PTOLEMÆUS, HERACLEON, CELSUS — CANON OF MURATORI.

OUR author says of Basilides, "He was founder of a system of Gnosticism, who lived at Alexandria about the year 125. With the exception of a very few brief fragments, none of his writings have been preserved, and all our information regarding them is derived from writers opposed to him. Eusebius states that Agrippa Castor, who had written a refutation of the doctrines of Basilides, 'Says that he had composed twenty-four books upon the gospel.' This is interpreted by Tischendorf to imply that the work was a commentary upon our four Gospels, a conclusion the audacity of which can scarcely be exceeded" (p. 42). I remark that by "the gospel" would

be meant the gospel which was preached by the apostles, and Tischendorf is not far wrong in supposing that the written records of it in the hands of the first Christians was the subject of the commentary. Our author has certainly not proved the contrary. He says: "We know that Basilides made use of a Gospel, written by himself it is said, but certainly called after his own name; . . . but the fragments of that work which are extant are of a character which precludes the possibility of the work being considered a Gospel." Neander affirmed the Gospel of Basilides to be the Gospel according to the Hebrews. I remark that that is not only probable, but that the Gospel to the Hebrews may have been the Hebrew translation of the Greek Gospel of Matthew, with its additions and modifications, to suit the Jewish Nazarene sect, who, we know, had a Hebrew text of their own, which they did not hesitate to alter and adapt to their own views. Basilides, says our author, expressly states that he received his knowledge of the truth from Glaucis, the "interpreter of Peter," whose disciple he claimed to be. Basilides also claimed to have received from a certain Matthias the report of private discourses which he had heard from the

Saviour for his special instruction. Canon Westcott writes: "Since Basilides lived on the verge of the apostolic times, it is not surprising that be made use of other sources of Christian doctrine besides the canonical books. The belief in Divine inspiration was still fresh and real."[1] Our author says: "It is apparent, however, that Basilides, in basing his doctrine on these apocryphal books as inspired, and upon tradition, and in having a special Gospel called after his own name, ignores the canonical Gospels, offers no evidence for their existence, but proves that he did not recognise any such works as of authority." I remark, the question is not their authority, but, Did they exist? Basilides wrote a book, called it a Gospel, or commentary of the Gospel, and made as much use as suited his heretical purpose of the canonical records, of tradition, and of other books. This seems to be what we can arrive at. Hippolytus, writing of the Basilideans and describing their doctrines, uses the singular pronoun "he"—"he says," in a passage of which our author gives an unintelligible translation. This pronoun is an inconvenient witness. Our author wants it to be

[1] "On the Canon," p. 255.

"they," in order that the disciples of Basilides living at a later period, when the Gospels were generally recognised, may be meant, and not Basilides, who lived A.D. 125. Hippolytus has a sentence of Basilides, which our author translates as follows:—"Jesus, however, was generated according to *these*, as we have already said. But when the generation which has already been declared had taken place, all things regarding the Saviour, according to *them*, occurred in a similar way as they have been written in the Gospel." This means that the things referring to the Incarnation were as *written* in the Gospel, not as preached, but as written; and if Basilides, as the founder of the sect, is referred to, the statement testifies to the existence of the Gospels in the year 125, and the doctrine of the Incarnation being in them. But our author says the statement is not made in connection with Basilides, but his followers; that it is made about A.D. 225, by Hippolytus, and affords no proof that either Basilides or his followers used the Gospels or admitted their authority. "The exclusive use, by any one, of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, for instance, would be perfectly consistent with the statement" (p. 48). "No one who considers what

is known of that Gospel, or who thinks of the use made of it in the first half of the second century by perfectly orthodox Fathers, before we hear anything of our Gospels, can doubt this" (p. 48). I remark, that those who adopt Tischendorf's view, that Matthew was written in Greek, and a corrupted version in Hebrew, used in certain countries, will not have to resort to any such explanation as our author suggests. His examination in detail of the several quotations is important, because it exhibits his want of appreciation of the evidence they afford. The first passage Tischendorf points out is found in the "Stromata" of Clement of Alexandria, and it is certainly from our Gospel of Matthew,[1] however that work may have been compiled (for it is not necessary to insist that no other records than Matthew's own are included in the book which, we contend, was at very early date read in the Churches, and is what we now have). "They say the Lord answered, All men cannot receive this saying. For there are eunuchs who are indeed from birth, but others from necessity."[2] Our author says "this passage in its affinity to, and material variation from, our First Gospel,

[1] See Matt. xix. 11, 12.

[2] "Strom." iii. 1.

might be quoted as evidence for the use of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, but it is simply preposterous to point to it as evidence for the use of Matthew. Apologists . . . seem altogether to ignore the history of the creation of written Gospels, and to forget the very existence of the πολλοὶ of Luke." We value his acknowledgment, and find no difficulty, notwithstanding the silence of some apologists, in reconciling our belief in the four Gospels with the facts or probabilities of what can be ascertained as to their "creation." We allow that the word Luke uses (πολλοὶ) refers to many, which is consistent with the idea that many committed to writing what they knew, and that their records were embodied in the Synoptic Gospels.

The next passage referred to by Tischendorf is one quoted by Epiphanius: "And therefore he said, Cast not ye pearls before swine, neither give that which is holy unto dogs."[1] "It is introduced in the section of the work of Epiphanius directed against the Basilideans. As in dealing with all these heresies there is continual interchange of reference to the head and later followers, there is no certainty who is referred to

[1] "Hær." xxiv. 5.

in these quotations, and in this instance nothing to indicate that the passage is ascribed to Basilides himself. His name is mentioned in the first line of the first chapter, but not again until the fifth chapter" (p. 50).

I remark, it was the founder of the sect and not the followers who wrote the book, and those who opposed the heresy would, although they alluded to the sect, have regard to the founder when they referred to the doctrines held, and quoted the written opinions which distinguished the party on gospel matters. To make the matter as plain as I can, I will suppose a case as an illustration of the point. Supposing that in Pliny's letter to Trajan there were found these words referring to the Christians: "They say, the rule which should be observed in regard to an enemy is, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which persecute you"—would it be right to assert that the quotation is no proof that Christ so taught, but His disciples, long afterwards? This is something like what our author's objection, referring to the pronouns "he" and "they" in Hippolytus, amounts to. "They" does not mean "he" when thus used; and

"he," when actually used in the first line of the first chapter, and afterwards means, "they;" that is, "He (Basilides) says," means "They (his followers at a later date) say."

The plural pronoun is used, indicating the sect, Basilides and his followers. Therefore our author says there is uncertainty as to who he is when used in the same sentence. He says "Hippolytus is giving an epitome of the views of the school with nothing more definite than a subjectless φησί (he says) to indicate who is referred to. None of the quotations which we have considered are directly referred to Basilides himself, but they are introduced by the utterly vague expression, 'He says' (φησί), without any subject accompanying the verb."

The suggestion (p. 51) that Hippolytus "consciously or unconsciously, in the course of transfer to his pages, corrected the text," is very unsatisfactory. An intelligent reader cannot fail to see how an obvious inference is avoided, and how ingenuity is taxed to make words square with foregone conclusions.

Tischendorf asks: "Who is there so sapient as to draw the line between what the master alone says, and that which the disciples state, without

in the least repeating the master?" (p. 59) and our author says, "Tischendorf solves the difficulty by referring everything indiscriminately to the master" (p. 59). To say that Tischendorf does this is reckless assertion.

When our author has to account for such a passage in Basilides as, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee," he says it *happens* to agree with the words in Luke i. 55; and resorts to his usual mode of avoiding the acknowledgment that such a verbatim quotation is against his hypothesis, by saying, "There is good reason for concluding that the narrative to which it belongs was contained in other Gospels." The following sentence is startling, and apt to mislead those who do not take the trouble to be sure of his meaning. He says (p. 67): "Nothing, however, can be clearer than the fact that this quotation, by whoever made, is not taken from our Third Synoptic, inasmuch as there does not exist a single MS. which contains such a passage." What does he mean? We turn to Luke i. 35, and read: "The Holy *Ghost* shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called

the *Son of God.*" Does he mean the whole passage is not in any MS? No: he means the following, with the slight variation at the end, is not in any MS. "The Holy *Spirit* shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore the thing begotten of thee shall be called *holy.*" Only the words in italics are different in the two passages, and the meaning is the same, the only difference being that the latter does not include the words "the Son of God." The remark that the quotation *happens* to agree with the passage in Luke i. 35, should not be unnoticed.

Happens! Mark the peculiar inappropriateness of the word. It indicates our author's whereabouts, and is a beacon in the book to warn the reader. Events transpire, and they *happen* to agree with prophetic visions which plainly foretold them! Reason being unequal to an explanation, coincidence must be resorted to. Was it an accident that, "at one particular point in history, and in one special individual, the elements of a new religious development, which, *per se*, were already extant, should have concentrated themselves in a new life?" This, says Baur, is "the wonder in the history of the origin of Christianity which no

historical reflection can further analyse." Did it *happen* that the Messiah came as was predicted centuries before ?

Did Paul *happen* to have a vision just at the time when the whole course of his life underwent a change, and from being a chief persecutor of the faith he became a chief apostle—no less an apostle than the most prominent among the Twelve ? If the Saviour did not meet him on the way to Damascus he could not be an apostle ; and as he was an honest man, and no impostor, could what *happened* to him have been other than what he asserted? Baur was in a great difficulty about the matter, and said, "*No analysis, either psychological or didactic, can clear up the mystery of that act in which God revealed His Son in Paul.*" Jeremiah prophesied that the Jews should return to their own land after seventy years of exile, and they *happened* to do so !

The artful way in which the evidence from the writings of Hippolytus is disposed of is one of the most notable things in the book we are reviewing. The reader's attention is taxed to keep up with the sophistical argument, and our author finds it necessary to explain why he has been forced to go at such a length into these questions, as to risk "being very wearisome" to his readers (p. 73).

These remarks apply to a great extent to the examination of the evidence of Valentinus, described as "another Gnostic leader, who, about the year A.D. 140, came from Alexandria to Rome, and flourished till about A.D. 160." "Very little remains of the writings of this Gnostic, and we gain our only knowledge of them from a few quotations in the works of Clement of Alexandria, and some doubtful fragments preserved by others" (p. 56).

Marcion, the son of a bishop of Pontus, became a conspicuous heretic in the second century, and there was a book called "Marcion's Gospel," which has long furnished a field for criticism. He was a Pauline heretic, denouncing the Jewish party which insisted upon dragging Jewish observances into Christianity. He went to Rome about A.D. 139–142, and taught there some twenty years. His opinions were widely disseminated. His collection of apostolic writings, which is the oldest of which we have any trace, includes (says our author) a single Gospel and ten Epistles of Paul—viz., Galatians, Corinthians (2), Romans, Thessalonians (2), Ephesians (in the superscription of which there is, "to the Laodiceans)," Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

The Gospel of Marcion is not extant, but it is

referred to by his opponents, who affirmed that his evangelical work was an audaciously mutilated version of Luke's Gospel. Our author gives a brief account of the various opinions which have prevailed about the book during the last hundred years, and considers the discussion upon it far from closed. Is it a mutilation of Luke, or an independent work derived from the same source as his, or is it a more primitive version of that Gospel? Whence are the materials from which the portions of the text extant are derived? Tertullian and Epiphanius denounced Marcion's heresy. The former called him "impious and sacrilegious," which, our author says, implies anything but fair and legitimate criticism. I remark, Did he deserve the epithets? Would Paul, who tells the Colossians to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," have been less emphatic in his denunciations in such a case? Marcion was more Pauline than Petrine, but would Paul have failed to censure in the strongest language such a misrepresentation of Jehovah and the Old Testament economy as Marcion disseminated?

Can our author's assertion be absolutely true that "Tertullian and Epiphanius were only dogmatical, and not in the least critical"? How could they be otherwise than to a certain extent critical? They were not critics in the way of taking nothing for granted, after the modern fashion; but they must have weighed, compared, and tested Marcion's views while writing against them. "The spirit of the age," he says, "was indeed so uncritical, that not even the canonical text could awaken it into activity." This is a sentence which suggests that the position in the Church of the canonical text was so evident, that to question it was then unwarrantable, as, indeed, it has continued to be to this day. The combined internal and external evidences harmonising with the believer's consciousness, his necessities, and his aspirations, were sufficient to preclude sceptical and captious criticism.

The Christian contemporaries of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius were uncritical in that they did not doubt that the foundations of their faith were sure. The gospel which had been preached to them, which had changed the whole course of their lives, corresponded in its main features with the four books which were held in

estimation by the Church at that time above all other writings; and they would not be likely to wrangle about the title instead of cultivating the faith they possessed. They could not, perhaps, prove by the rules of logic that "God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" that Christ is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person; but they knew that He had said,—"Ye believe in God believe also in me;" "In my Father's house are many mansions;" and, "I go to prepare a place for you." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." They lived in the consciousness of these truths, and died (Bishop Pothinus, for instance) a martyr's death rather than deny them.

There is this remark to be made in reference to the alleged uncritical age of the Fathers. How is it that Marcion is seen to be so critical? He is surely after the modern model. He who wrote the "Antithesis," and, as our author says, anticipated in some of his opinions those held by many in our own time; he who wrote,—"If the God of the Old Testament be good, prescient of the future, and able to avert evil, why did he allow man, made in his own image, to be deceived by

the devil, and to fall from obedience of the law into sin and death?[1] How came the devil, the origin of lying and deceit, to be made at all?"[2] surely he is an instance of a man in that age possessing the critical faculty. He has the boldness to question, and say,—"Yea, hath God said?" "Anticipating the results of modern criticism," says our author, "Marcion denies the applicability to Jesus of the so-called Messianic prophecies" (p. 106).

If the research which is going on as to the Gospel of Marcion be conducted in a proper manner, and from a proper motive, not from antipathy to "parsons" and ecclesiastical assumptions, which was the incentive of Strauss in attacking Christianity, good will come of it. As Justin Martyr did not, as far as we know, suppose the book to be a corrupted version of the Gospel according to Luke, Tertullian may have been mistaken, and it may have been an independent work, one of the many Luke refers to, the existence of which does not necessarily invalidate the canonical ones. We may naturally suppose that events of such marvellous speciality and importance as those which had "come to pass" in those days

[1] Tertullian, "Adv. Marc." xi. 5, cf. 9. [2] Ibid. xi. 10.

among the Jews, would be more or less described in letters and other writings by many persons who were eye-witnesses. Such writings would be collected and read when the first Christians assembled. The difference between the four canonical Gospels and other manuscripts would consist in their being compiled by persons competent to the task, who, like Ezra, were instruments Divinely influenced to compile and "set forth in order a declaration of those things," for the benefit of future ages and the religious instruction of the race.

The analysis of the text of Marcion by Hahn, Ritschl, Volkmar, Helgenfeld, and others, who have examined and systemised the data of the Fathers, is supposed to be sufficient to awaken in any inquirer uncertainty, and stimulate conjecture (p. 101). I do not doubt it. German hypercriticism is able, by a process of ratiocination, to discredit any truth, even to persuade men that the Throne of the universe is vacant, and that the only altar that man has the knowledge to rear is one to the Unknown God; but

> "He sits on no precarious throne,
> Nor borrows leave to be."

They who believe in the inspiration by the Holy

Ghost of the prophets of the Old Testament see no difficulty in regard to the inspiration of the writers of the New. If Isaiah and Jeremiah and Daniel had supernatural communications made to them, in order that the Eternal Creator might be manifested, why not Paul and John and Matthew? It is the foregone conclusion, on the part of critics, that the miraculous is impossible, which embarrasses their researches. One of John Stuart Mill's last sentences is: "It remains a possibility that Christ actually was what He supposed Himself to be." If this had occurred to the great reasoner at the outset of his career instead of the close, how much might the world have been advantaged!

Tatian is a witness whose evidence our author next tries to set aside. He was an Assyrian by birth, a disciple of Justin Martyr at Rome, and afterwards, having joined the sect of the Eucratites, a conspicuous exponent of their austere and ascetic doctrines. The only one of his writings extant is his Oration to the Greeks, written after Justin's death, as it refers to that event, and it is generally dated A.D. 170–175. One point contested is Canon Westcott's affirmation that it contains a "clear reference" to a parable recorded

by Matthew:[1] 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid, and for his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.'" And the supposed reference by Tatian is, "For by means of a certain hidden treasure he has taken to himself all that we possess, for which, while we are digging, we are indeed covered with dust, but we succeed in making it our fixed possession."[2]

There is certainly not much similarity between the two passages, although Tatian may be well supposed to have had the parable in his mind when he wrote. The more important question is, Did Tatian write "A Harmony of Four Gospels," which recognises our four Evangelists? Was his Diatessaron such a book, or was it the Gospel according to the Hebrews? If the latter, what is the Gospel according to the Hebrews? I say it is probable it is the corrupted Hebrew translation of the Greek Gospel of Matthew, and this conjecture has more in its favour than our author's hypothesis.

Dionysius of Corinth, Eusebius tells us, wrote seven epistles to various Churches, and a letter to Chrysophora, "a most faithful sister." Only a

[1] Matt. xiii. 44.

[2] "Orat. ad Gr." § 30.

few short fragments exist, which are all from the epistle to Soter, Bishop of Rome, whose date in that pastorate is A.D. 168–176. In these fragments we find the following words:—"For the brethren having requested me to write epistles, I write them. And the apostles of the devil have filled these with tares, both taking away parts and adding others, for whom the woe is destined. It is not surprising, then, if some have recklessly ventured to adulterate the Scriptures of the Lord, when they have corrupted these, which are not of such importance."[1] After quoting this passage, our author reiterates his statement that "We have seen that there has not been a trace of any New Testament Canon in the writings of the Fathers before and during this age." Does he suppose his readers will have seen as he sees, or rather refuse to see what is plain enough? He has his own opinion, but he need not assume that he has convinced his readers that he has proved what he alleges. He talks of Westcott's boldness, and of his imagination running away with him, and that it is simply preposterous to suppose that this passage refers to the New Testament. I leave Canon Westcott to defend

[1] Eusebius, "H. E." iv. 23.

his own words, but I say it is not preposterous to infer that when Dionysius speaks of the "Scriptures of the Lord" he means Gospel writings, which are included in our New Testament. If it be assumed that the defence of the authority of the New Testament writings and of evangelical views is necessarily based on the synodical authority of the early Church, there may be some weight in his objections; but Christianity has a position independent of ecclesiastical pretensions to infallibility, and the latter may be overthrown without the great institution established by Divine mercy for the recovery of humanity from sin and its consequences being in the slightest degree damaged. Dr. Donaldson is quoted, who remarks: "It is not easy to settle what this term, 'Scriptures of the Lord,' is; but my own opinion is that it most probably refers to the Gospels, as containing the sayings and doings of the Lord. It is not likely, as Lardner supposes, that such a term would be applied to the whole of the New Testament."[1] The word "Scripture," in Greek, *Γραφή* (Graphé), in Latin, *Scriptura*, has, no doubt, a meaning which denotes an inspired writing. It is used fifty-one times in the New

[1] "Hist. Christ. Lit. and Doct." ii. p. 217.

Testament in the same sense, for Christ and the authors of the New Testament regarded the Old Testament as distinguished from all other writings, as *the* writing—the writing of God. By speaking of their own books as Graphai, the apostles place them on a level with the Old Testament, and thus assert their Divine character.[1]

Dr. Davidson speaks of the New Testament writings being ranked as "Holy Scripture" by Dionysius of Corinth, A.D. 170.

Our author asserts (p. 167) that "many works were regarded as inspired by the Fathers besides those in our Canon," and mentions especially the Gospel of Peter having been read at Rhossus. He says: "The fact that Serapion, in the third century, allowed the Gospel of Peter to be used in the Church of Rhossus shows the consideration in which it was held, and the incompleteness of the canonical position of the New Testament." Now, he ought to have quoted Serapion's own explanation, which we have preserved by Eusebius. He says (in his treatise written to confute what was false in the Gospel of Peter): "We receive Peter and the other apostles even as Christ; but the writings falsely called by their names, we, as com-

[1] See Chr. Wordsworth, "On the Canon," p. 55. Lec. ii. 2nd Ed. 1851.

petent critics, renounce, knowing that we received not such things. For when I was with you I supposed that all were agreed with the true faith; and, without reading the Gospel called Peter's, which they brought forward, I said, If this is the only thing that seems to cause you dissension, let it be dead." Serapion says he borrowed the book and read it, and found many things agreeable to Christ's doctrine, but some discrepant additions.

Thus the reading of the Gospel of Peter at Rhossus cannot be instanced as a proof that other Gospels besides the canonical ones were used as inspired books, nor can any other be mentioned as having been thus regarded, the Gospel according to the Hebrews not being apocryphal, but a part of the New Testament, whether we take it to be, as our author supposes, the basis of Matthew's Gospel, or, as we say, a corrupted version of that apostle's Greek work. "To argue that because one spurious Gospel was temporarily received among a few persons, therefore there was no real canon of Scripture, and we cannot be sure that any Gospel is genuine, shows about as much common sense and logical acumen as would be displayed by a critic eighteen centuries hence, who,

discovering in one of our newspapers an account of the conviction of a gang of coiners, should argue that because their base half-crowns had got into circulation, and had passed current with some persons who might have been expected to detect the fraud, therefore there was no such thing as a legal currency of intrinsic value among us; or if there were, still we did not know or care to inquire into the genuineness of the coin which we accepted and passed."[1]

Our author says (p. 16): "'The Pastor of Hermas,' which was read in the churches, and nearly secured a permanent place in the Canon, was quoted as inspired by Irenæus."[2]

The word Irenæus uses is *Graphé*, which is sometimes translated, when found in his works, *Scripture*, and at other times *writings*, as may best suit the argument of a critic like Dr. Davidson, who does so adapt the translation to suit his purpose.

Whatever erroneous notions might prevail as to apocryphal writings, the discrimination of Serapion, in regard to the Gospel of Peter, shows that such a work as the "Pastor of Hermas," in

[1] See Kentish Bache's "Letters to Dr. Davidson," p. 22.
[2] "Adv. Hær." iv. 20, §2; Euseb. "H. E." v. 8, and cf. iii. 3.

which, as Mosheim says, the angels are made to "talk more insipidly than our scavengers and porters," would not be put on a level with the books whose internal evidence, as well as historical pretensions, placed them in a much superior position. The contrast is too great for such men as Irenæus and Tertullian, as well as Serapion, not to have recognised the difference. The "gross forgeries" were too gross to be at once accepted as genuine by the Fathers of the slight critical faculty and the ready credulity of our author's argument.

Melito of Sardis, whose writings, it is generally agreed, belong to A.D. 176, because the fragment extant has a phrase indicating that Commodus had been admitted to share the Imperial Government with Marcus Aurelius, is the next witness. He writes to Onesimus, "a fellow-Christian who had urged him to make selections for him from the Law and the Prophets concerning the Saviour and the faith generally, and furthermore desired to learn the accurate account of the old (Palaion) books." "Having gone to the East," Melito says, "and reached the spot where each thing was preached and done, and having learned accurately the books of the Old Testament, I have sent a

list of them." Dr. Westcott excites our author's ire because he says "that the use of the word 'old' in this way implies that there must have been a New Testament, and the form of language implies a familiar recognition of its contents." This is "truly astonishing," says our author. I remark, it is truly astonishing that any one should assert that the use of the adjective "old" in this sentence does not plainly indicate the existence of other books of a New Covenant or Testament. If the Jewish Scriptures had been merely described as *old books*, we could have understood the objection; but as the words occur, "*having learned accurately the books of the Old Testament*," we must side with Dr. Westcott, in spite of our author's astonishment.

Claudius Apollinaris, Eusebius says, was Bishop of Hierapolis, and there is the fragment of a letter of Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, which supports the statement, and in which Apollinaris is referred to as the "most blessed." The date of his writings, in consequence of an allusion to the Thundering Legion of the army of Marcus Aurelius, may be fixed at about A.D. 174. None of them are extant. We have only two brief fragments, in which the controversy respecting the observance of the Christian Passover is alluded

to. The following passage is important: "There are some, however, who through ignorance raise contentions regarding these matters in a way which should be pardoned, for ignorance must not be pursued with accusation, but requires instruction. And they say that the Lord, together with His disciples, ate the lamb on the great day of unleavened bread, and they state that Matthew says precisely what they have understood; hence their understanding of it is at variance with the law, and according to them the Gospels seem to contradict each other." Tischendorf and Westcott naturally adduce this passage in support of the position of the four canonical Gospels. Our author demurs, arguing that "there is such exceedingly slight reason for attributing these fragments to Claudius Apollinaris, and so many strong grounds for believing that he cannot have written them, that they have no material value as evidence for the antiquity of the Gospels" (p. 191).

Athenagoras wrote an apology, entitled "The Embassy of Athenagoras the Athenian, a Philosopher and a Christian, concerning Christians, to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, Armeniaci Surmatici, and, above all, Philosophers;" and also a "Trea-

tise on the Resurrection of the Body." A passage from the former occurs in the work of Methodius on the Resurrection, and is preserved by Epiphanius and by Photius.

"For we have learnt not only not to render a blow, nor to go to law with those who spoil and plunder us; but, to those who inflict a blow on one side, also to present the other side of the head in return for smiting; and to those who take away the coat, also to give besides the cloke."[1]

Of this our author says: "No echo of the words of Matthew has lingered in the ear of the writer, for he employs utterly different phraseology throughout; and *nothing can be more certain than the fact* that there is not a linguistic trace in it of acquaintance with our Synoptics" (p. 194).

The value of our author's conclusions may be measured by what he here asserts. It seems to me that the reverse may be asserted. (1) That words in Matthew *did* "linger in the ear of the writer;" (2) that he *does not* "employ utterly different phraseology throughout;" and (3) that many things "*can* be more certain than the fact that there is not a linguistic trace in it of acquaintance with our Synoptics."

[1] "Leg. pro Christ." § 1.

The next passage which is referred to is as follows: — "What, then, are those precepts in which we are instructed? I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in the heavens, who maketh his sun," &c.[1]

There is also the following:—"For if ye love, them which love you, and lend to them which lend to you, what reward shall ye have?"[2]

Of this passage, our author says it is evident that it does not agree with either of the Synoptics. "We have seen," says he, "the persistent variation in the quotations from the Sermon on the Mount which occur in Justin, and there is no part of the discourses of Jesus more certain to have been preserved by living Christian tradition, or to have been recorded in every form of Gospel. The differences in these passages from our Synoptics present the same features as mark the several versions of the same discourse in our First and Third Gospel, and indicate a distinct source" (p. 195). I remark, every step our author takes in this sort of criticism tends to the confirmation of

[1] "Leg. pro Christ." § 11. See Matt. v. 44, 45.
[2] "Leg. pro. Christ. § 12." Comp. with Matt. v. 46.

our Christian faith, which is not the Christianity of a creed or a Church, but the belief in a Person. The more independent accounts of His life and discourses which can be traced, the greater the proof of His advent and mission. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be accounted for apart from the superhuman. "Never man spake like this man." The more it is quoted the more it is established as a sublime fact in literature, which neither the Jewish race, nor the Augustan era, nor indeed any other race or any other age, could have originated apart from Divine intervention.

The Epistle of Vienne and Lyons, written from the Churches in those towns to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, about the year A.D. 177, giving an account of the terrible persecution which had broken out, is in part preserved by Eusebius. It contains words similar to those used in regard to Zacharias and Elisabeth, where they are said to have "walked in all the commandments and ordinances of God, blameless." And it has also the words, "And himself having the Spirit more abundantly than Zacharias," which compares with Luke i. 67: "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied." In reference to these passages, our author's comment is

as follows: "The state of the case is, we find a coincidence, in a few words in connection with Zacharias, between the Epistle and our Third Gospel; but so far from the Gospel being in any way indicated as their source, the words in question are, on the contrary, in association with a reference to events unknown to our Gospels, but which were indubitably chronicled elsewhere. It follows clearly, and few will venture to doubt the fact, that the allusion in the Epistle is to a Gospel different from ours, and not to our Third Synoptic at all" (p. 204). The event unknown to our Gospels is the martyrdom of Zacharias, which our Gospels make no mention of.

Ptolemæus and Heracleon, two Gnostic leaders, are next referred to. Of the former, Epiphanius has preserved "The Epistle to Flora," addressed to one of his disciples, which contains passages similar to sentences found in Matthew xii. 25, xix. 8, 6, xv. 4–8, v. 38, 39.; but our author objects that the Epistle "was in all probability written towards the end of the second century, and therefore it does not come within the scope of our inquiry;" and he goes into considerable detail to justify this statement.

Celsus wrote a work entitled "True Doctrine,"

which is not extant, and of which Origen wrote a refutation. Our author says "it refers to incidents of Gospel history and quotes some sayings which have parallels, with more or less of variation, in our Gospels;" but "Celsus nowhere mentions the name of any Christian book, unless we except the Book of Enoch, and he accuses Christians, not without reason, of interpolating the Book of the Sibyl, whose authority he states some of them acknowledged" (p. 236). He goes into the question of the date, which he makes out to be probably not between A.D. 150–160, as Tischendorf suggests, but much later.

In the last fragment of early literature examined —the Canon of Muratori—the Book of Luke is alluded to as "*the third Gospel*," and our author says (p. 241) "the statement regarding the Third Gospel *merely* proves the existence of that Gospel at the time the fragment was composed," and that "the inference" that there was a first and second Gospel is a *mere* conjecture. I remark that if the statement does prove that Luke's Gospel existed at the time the fragment was composed, we gratefully accept the acknowledgment; and as to the adverbs "*mere*" and "*merely*," which qualify the noun "*conjecture*" and verb "*proves*,"

when our author's third volume appears, if it does not furnish more than "*mere conjecture*" that the first and second preceded it, we will allow the adverbs properly applied, and the logic perfect.

The sentences in which such words as *certainly, it is certain, it is undeniable, there is no question, it is impossible to suppose, it is obviously mere speculation,* &c., are used, where the reasoning does not warrant them, are innumerable; and it is only after becoming familiar with the special pleading which is characteristic of the work throughout, that the unsophisticated reader escapes from the bewilderment into which the evidences of Christianity seem to get entangled. The author seems to have got the reader into a gloomy cavern of criticism, and it is only after the eye has become accustomed to the partial darkness that he can make out whether what he is taken to see are real figures, images, or ghosts. When he has got to the middle of the second volume, however, he begins to see the light again, and breathe more freely. He sees a way right through the cavern, and finds that the figures of this underground chamber of horrors are all phantoms.

The "Examiner" justly says: "For our part

we see no reason why the Synoptic [1] Gospels may not have assumed their present form by the end of the first century;[2] and we cannot think that our author's German oracles have succeeded in establishing their dissimilarity from the documents quoted by the Primitive Fathers. Justin Martyr's references to the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, appear to us to be actually derived from Matthew. If, however, as is contended, they were taken from the lost "Gospel of the Hebrews," this merely proves the substantial identity of the two. The question of Justin's acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel is more difficult. We are nevertheless disposed to resolve it in the affirmative."

This is a sensible comment on our author's general argument.

[1] The word Synoptics, applied to Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels, indicates abridgment—the bringing of all parts under one view.—*See Dr. Hyde Clark's Dictionary.*

[2] "Negative critics, as we have seen, have been compelled again to raise the age of the Gospels, and to place them in the apostolic age, between A.D. 50 and A.D. 100."—*Dr. Christlieb*, p. 541.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

"Every trace has vanished of the great nameless one."

Baur.

"The denial of the authenticity of John's Gospel is a source of far greater difficulties than its acknowledgment."

Ritschl.

"The doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Without it Christianity, as a theological and as a philosophical system, cannot rank above Rabbinism and Mahommedanism."

Bunsen.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THE evidence that to John the Apostle is to be ascribed the Fourth Gospel, is worthy of the best attention we can bestow upon it. After that apostle had been dead half a century, this book, as is acknowledged by our author and all other critics, occupied a prominent place among the manuscripts of the Christians, with the name of John, as the author, attached; and the question now arises, after nearly eighteen centuries of belief in its authorship and authority, is there reasonable ground for doubting that it can be properly attributed to the apostle who was the companion, disciple, and bosom friend of Jesus? I think the question may be answered with confidence upon the evidence within our reach.

In the first place, Irenæus believed it was the Gospel according to John the Apostle; and who

was Irenæus, that his belief in it should be good evidence? He was not John's contemporary, but there was one between John and Irenæus who was so intimate with both that the link of evidence is fully to be relied upon, and that link is Polycarp. Therefore, Irenæus, who was a hearer of Polycarp, can tell us something about it. Now Polycarp was born in the time of Nero, so he was for thirty-two years a contemporary of John's, and was his disciple. And Irenæus says in a letter written to a person called Florinus, and preserved by Eusebius: "When I was yet a youth, I saw thee in Asia Minor, at Polycarp's house, where thou wert distinguished at court, and obtained the regard of the bishop. I can more distinctly recollect things which happened then than others more recent, for events which happened in youth seem to grow with the mind, and to become part of ourselves. So I can tell the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and his personal appearance, and his discourses to the people, and how he related his intercourse *with John*, and the rest who had seen the Lord; and how he rehearsed their sayings, and what things there were which

he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His *miracles*, and about His doctrine; and how Polycarp, having learned from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, narrated all things agreeably with the Scriptures. And to these things, by God's mercy bestowed on me at that time, I used diligently to listen, writing the remembrance of them, not on paper, but in my heart; and, by God's grace, I am always meditating affectionately upon them."[1]

Now we may be certain that Polycarp would be likely to know the truth of the matter, and Irenæus declares that "*John, the disciple of the Lord who leaned on the bosom of the Lord at supper*, wrote the Apocalypse."[1] So we have here reliable evidence that John wrote both the Apocalypse and the book whose author leaned on our Lord's bosom at supper. Not only this from Polycarp. There is extant "The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians," which Irenæus believed to be genuine, and in it we find these words: "For whosoever doth not confess Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh, is antichrist." I compare this with the words in John's Epistle: "And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in

[1] "Hist. Eccl." v. 20. [2] Ibid. iv. 22.

the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist." Our author says it is not a verbatim quotation. I say it is a quotation, if not verbatim. It is acknowledged that the author of the First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel is the same, the ideas and style being so much alike. "The two writings," says Rénan, "present the most complete identity of style, the same peculiarities, the same favourite expressions."

It is impossible to doubt that Polycarp would have learned from John himself whether he was the author of a Gospel; and if Irenæus had never heard Polycarp allude to the Gospel as John's, he could not have believed in it as he did, and have plainly stated that John wrote it and the Apocalypse. There would have been in this case a justifiable inference from "silence." If Polycarp in his teaching had never alluded to John's Gospel, it would have been so strange that Irenæus would have deemed it spurious altogether, and unworthy of the estimation with which he regarded it; for it is one of the four Gospels that he fancifully likens to the four corners of the earth, the four principal winds, and the four wings of the Seraphim. It is to be remembered that our author acknowledges Irenæus so regarded all

the four Gospels, for he alludes (p. 91) to "the arbitrary assumption of exclusive originality and priority for the four Gospels" by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius. It is evident that this Fourth Gospel could not have first appeared as late as A.D. 150, but must have been in existence long before; and on the testimony of Irenæus, through Polycarp, from John himself, its authenticity may be considered established.

The evidence from the work of Hippolytus, entitled, "The Refutation of all Heresies," that Basilides quoted from the Fourth Gospel, our author dismisses in one paragraph (p. 371), having fully referred to the testimony from that writer in treating of the Synoptics. There are, however, two very distinct passages which cannot be objected to as quotations, and the attempt to get rid of them by the substitution of the plural pronoun "they" for the singular one "he," in the text of Hippolytus, is an utter failure. The first is from John i. 9, "The true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and the words in "The Refutation," by Hippolytus, are, "And this, he says, is that which has been stated in the Gospels, 'He was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'"

The other is, "Mine hour is not yet come," agreeing with John ii. 4. The discovery of the work, "The Refutation of all Heresies," in the year 1841, at Mount Athos, by the erudite Minoides Mynas, a Greek, in the employ of the French Government, was important as bearing on this question, for it proves that the Fourth Gospel was in existence thirty years earlier than the Tübingen criticism asserted. Our author's want of appreciation of the evidence found in Hippolytus is one of the weakest points in his book.

Is the Fourth Gospel quoted by Justin Martyr? Our author says, No! I say, Yes! to the question. In his Dialogue with Tryphon (p. 316) occur the words, "I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying," which is evidently from that Gospel, for we know of no other which makes John the Baptist say the same. He says "the evangelical work of which Justin made use was obviously different from our Gospels, and the evident conclusion to which any impartial mind must arrive is, that there is not only not the slightest ground for affirming that Justin quoted the passage (as above) from the Fourth Gospel, from which he so fundamentally differs,

but every reason on the contrary to believe that he derived it from a particular Gospel; in all probability the Gospel according to the Hebrews" (p. 302). I remark, that the words, "I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying," could not be quoted from the Gospel according to the Hebrews if that supposed independent book did not contain them, and there is no evidence that it did. On the contrary, our Gospel of Matthew, compiled, as we suppose, partly from it, would have in that case had the words; and as it has not, and as only John's Gospel has them, the inference is clear that Justin had seen the latter, as well as the other Gospel or Gospels from which the earlier part of the sentence is taken. The whole of Justin's sentence is as follows: "For John sat by the Jordan and preached the baptism of repentance, wearing only a leathern girdle and raiment of camel's hair, and eating nothing but locusts and wild honey. Men supposed him to be the Christ, wherefore he cries to them, "*I am not Christ*, but the voice of one crying (or preaching). For he cometh who is greater than I, whose shoes I am not meet to bear."

We find in the second "Apology" (p. 94) these words: "Christ said, 'Except ye be born again

ye may not enter into the kingdom of heaven;'" and in the very same line is continued the reference to the conversation with Nicodemus, in these words: "But that it is impossible for those who have been once born to enter into their mother's womb, is plain to all." I scarce need remind you how the statement of Christ and the question of Nicodemus are as close together in the Fourth Gospel. The passage there is, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" The two sentences, coming together in both, leaves no doubt that Justin used the Fourth Gospel, for there is nothing like them in any of the other Gospels.

It is something to have from Justin Martyr the evidence that Jesus taught Nicodemus that a man cannot see the kingdom of God without being born of the Holy Ghost. If Justin quoted from an earlier Gospel, it is against our author's non-superhuman theory; and if from our Gospels, it is equally so. But, supposing that he could prove that Justin did not quote, that would *not* prove that the books were not in existence.

Paul's Epistles, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Romans, all written not later than the year 58, are they quoted, as we might suppose they would be, by Justin? We know nothing as to the extent of his library. He might have had copies of all these Gospels and Epistles, or none at hand to quote verbatim from. Was there a concordance, to help a writer to be exact, after the modern demand?

The internal evidence of the Fourth Gospel is, perhaps, not so appreciable by our author as the external, on account of his foregone conclusion that the superhuman is incredible. But as "there is no feasible explanation of the Divine origin of Christianity without acknowledging the Divine mission of Jesus," so is there no possible explanation of the Fourth Gospel without a recognition of the evangelical doctrine of the triune in the Divine Nature—the threefold manifestation of the one God. Exclude from the Fourth Gospel the idea of the Holy Spirit having inspired John to write it, and there naturally follows the attempt to exclude the book from its historical and authoritative position. It has a perfectly harmonious place in the superhuman means by which spiritual truth is exhibited and enforced for the benefit of

mankind, but that place is an advanced one. It was the last of inspired utterances, and it presupposes the development that it supplements, and which it designs to promote. The Holy Spirit, "the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," to make us "perfect in every good work to do His will," must be recognised and duly honoured if the Bible is to be understood and Christianity successfully exhibited and defended. Let us turn to the book. It opens with allusions to the dignity of Christ the Messiah which no philosophy known in Alexandria had a conception of. Philo and his Platonic school discoursed of the Logos; but their doctrine is distinct from that of this Gospel. Justin takes up their idea, as our author shows (p. 278), and draws a distinction between the Logos and Jesus, describing Jesus Christ as being made flesh by the power of the Logos; for Justin says,—"Through the power of the Word, according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, he was born a man of a virgin."[1] Philo says,[2]—"The Logos of God is above all things in the word, and is the most ancient and most

[1] "Apol." i. 46.

[2] "Leg." iii. § 61.

universal of all things *created.*" I do not deny that Justin got ideas of the Logos from the Old Testament and from the writings of Philo, as shown by our author, but I submit that he confused their doctrine with the more developed truth of the New Testament. "It is certain," he says (p. 291), "that both Justin and Philo, unlike the prelude to the Fourth Gospel, place the Logos in a secondary position to God the Father, indicating a less advanced stage in the doctrine. 'He calls the Word constantly the first-born of all *created* beings'" (p. 292). Our author says,—"We do not propose in this work to enter fully into the history of the Logos doctrine" (p. 280). Had he done so, he could not have shown that the doctrine reached to the height of the apostolic conception. There is no allusion to the Divinity of the Logos, as John and Paul assert; and no reference to the unquestionable statement of Scripture that, in the Word made flesh, we have a revelation of the mysterious triune nature of Jehovah. A vague notion of it is found in many idolatrous systems of religious worship, and its prevalence is an indication of the truth which tradition, from primitive revelation,

has handed down; but the mystery, as Paul says, was hidden for ages and generations, and was not made manifest until, in the fulness of time, the scheme of Redemption was fully unfolded. The gospel is called by Paul "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by a clear interpretation of the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."[1] To concentrate the doctrine in the Fourth Gospel and Paul's later epistles, and then repudiate the writings, is a mode of sustaining the denial of it which is far from being successful. This doctrine is evidently one of the essential elements of Christian truth. As the bread which sustains our bodily life, so the bread of the life of the soul, may be decomposed, but none of the elements must be left out of it if it is to be of use. In the Old Testament we find many passages which show the plurality in the Divine nature. The doctrine, it is true, was not so revealed as to be conspicuous at the time, for if it had been, it would have been misunderstood, and thus tended to interfere with the schooling which the Jews

[1] Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

were undergoing to cure them of their proneness to idolatry; but with the New Testament in our hand we see what, without it, would be still hidden in obscurity. As we read the Fourth Gospel in the light of this doctrine, how it harmonises with the "plan of salvation" which believers in all evangelical Churches call Christianity! The book professes to be written that men, believing in Jesus Christ, may have eternal life; records the testimony of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (i. 29); and announces the important dogma that the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit is indispensable to overcome the unwillingness of the soul of man to receive the truths of the Divine revelation. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (vi. 44). "Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." It testifies to the Divine nature of Jesus in the most explicit manner. "Therefore the Jews sought to kill him," because he said "God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (v. 18). "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (v. 23). "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (viii. 19).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (viii. 58). "It is he (the Son of God) that talketh with thee. And he (the man who had been blind) said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (ix. 38). "I and my Father are one" (x. 30). "For blasphemy" (we stone thee), "and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God" x. 30). "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (xi. 25, 26). "Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him" (xiii. 32). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9).

The doctrine of what we call (not having a better word) the personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly indicated in such passages as the following:—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *he* may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth *him* not, neither knoweth *him:* but ye know *him;* for *he* dwelleth with you" (xiv. 17). "But the Comforter, the Holy

Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (xiv. 26). "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him* unto you. And when *he* is come, *he* will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (xvi. 7). "When *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth: for *he* shall not speak of *himself;* but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall *he* speak: and *he* will show you things to come" (xvi. 13). The seventeenth chapter I will not refer to in part, but specify entire, begging the reader to meditate on its marvellous comprehensiveness and expressiveness.

Much of the teaching of Jesus would be so far above the comprehension of the disciples when they heard it, that it would not be likely to be impressed on their memory. The Holy Spirit was to be sent, to bring all things to their remembrance; and it is only by this promise being fulfilled that we can understand the inspired words of the Fourth Gospel.

Could Jesus have said what He is described in

this book to have said, if God had not been with Him as He never was with any other man? If such a question be pertinent, how utterly needless the further question, Could the book have been written by the *nameless unknown some one* whom the hypothesis of its non-Johannine origin substitutes as the author?

Whatever difference there is between the composition of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalyse, there is, at all events, a striking analogy between the opening verses of the former and those in the latter, where the faithful and true witness is referred to as "the beginning of the creation of God,"[1] and as being set down with His Father upon His throne. In the preface to each of the addresses to the seven Churches Christ assumes the attributes and prerogatives of the Deity. The prominence given to the mysterious doctrine of the Divinity of Christ is as great in the one as the other.

It is somewhat singular that from Rénan, who so utterly rejects the miraculous, we should have such a decided opinion that it is appropriately entitled the Gospel according to John. After saying, "I dare not be sure that the Fourth

[1] Rev. iii. 14.

Gospel has been entirely written by a Galilean fisherman," he writes in his introduction to the "Life of Jesus": "No one doubts that towards the year 150 the Fourth Gospel did exist, and was attributed to John. Explicit texts from Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Irenæus, show that from thenceforth this Gospel mixed in every controversy, and served as corner-stone for the development of the faith. Irenæus is explicit. Now he came from the school of John, and between him and the apostle there was only Polycarp. The part played by this Gospel in Gnosticism, and especially in the system of Valentinus, in Montanism, and in the quarrel of the Quartodecimans, is not less decisive. The school of John was the most influential in the second century, and it is only by regarding the origin of the Gospel as coincident with the rise of the school, that the existence of the latter can be understood at all."

"The First Epistle, attributed to John, is certainly by the same author as the Fourth Gospel. Now this Epistle is recognised as from John by Polycarp, Papias, and Irenæus. But it is, above all, the perusal of the Fourth Gospel itself which is calculated to give the impression that John

must have written it. The author always speaks as an eye-witness. He wishes to pass for the Apostle John. If, then, this work is not really by the apostle, we must admit a fraud of which the author convicts himself. Now, although the ideas of the time respecting literary honesty differed essentially from ours, there is no example in the apostolic world of a falsehood of this kind. Besides, not only does the author wish to pass for the apostle, but we see clearly that he writes in the interest of this apostle."

As to the difference in language and style between it and the Apocalypse, it is not altogether unusual for an author to produce works which differ greatly from each other. An instance is mentioned by the Rev. Kentish Bache, in his letter to Dr. Davidson. "William Penn, within one and the same year (1668) wrote two different works, entitled 'The Sandy Foundation Shaken,' and 'Innocency with her Open Face.' The former pamphlet is circulated by the Unitarians as a tract demolishing the doctrine of the Trinity, while the latter is an earnest defence of that very doctrine; and yet Penn protests that his belief had undergone no change" (p. 35).

One of the difficulties in the way of the reception

of the Fourth Gospel is the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which the Synoptics do not record. A probable explanation is suggested by Grotius, who says, as Lazarus was living when the Synoptics were written, and as "the chief priests consulted that they might put him to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus,"[1] the publication of the miracle would have exposed Lazarus to more intense hostility, and endangered his life.

Our author makes the strange assertion that "the Fourth Gospel, by whomsoever written—even if it could be traced to the Apostle John—has no real historical value, being at best the glorified recollections of an old man, written down half a century after the events recorded" (p. 467). This bold assertion ignores the fact that the impressions of early life are, as a rule, indelibly fixed on the memory. Of no historical value, though written by John! Our author knows perfectly well that such an event as the raising of Lazarus from the dead could never fade from the memory of those who witnessed it. Does he overlook, or suppress, the consideration that John's recollection would be daily refreshed by

[1] John xii. 10.

the teaching of the principles of a gospel which consisted of these events and discourses? We can as well conceive of the Duke of Wellington having forgotten, when he was eighty years old, the campaigns of the Peninsula and the battle of Waterloo, as John forgetting the memorable transactions in the life of his Master with which he was so closely identified. Besides, we do not know that the materials for John's book had not long before been noted down. It is not probable that he who wrote the Apocalypse in the year 68 would put nothing into writing of the memoirs until close upon the time when the book was published. Such is not the mode of authorship now, and was not then. Supposing the apostle to have died, leaving behind him unarranged materials, including notes and memoranda made at various times, and that these were, with fidelity, but with more scholarship than John possessed, transcribed, edited, and made a book of, entitled "The Gospel according to John," we have an explanation of the linguistic difficulty which does not overstep the limits of reasonable probability.

Well may Dr. Davidson acknowledge "it is not easy to account for the early belief of its Johannine origin;" and that "if a disciple of John

wrote it, he had learned more than his master." It *would* have been "strange if such an author had continued unknown." If we reject the Johannine origin, we have to believe that during the fifty years between John's death and the time of the book's *general acceptance as his* there lived some one capable of writing it, of whom history and tradition are silent. This is certainly a large matter for sceptical credulity to swallow. How much easier to believe that "the refinement and beauty of composition, whose charm has captivated the world, is the work of a Grecian disciple, who wrote under the superintendence, if not dictation, of the apostle who only could have furnished the materials at the time when it was written. At the close of the first century all the other apostles were dead, and for its authorship we cannot look beyond the circle which surrounded Jesus at the instituting of that ever-abiding memorial of Him, "The Lord's Supper."

Among the anomalies of our author's hypothesis we have to think of the apostles living in the first century, and attaining their reputation as writers during the second. In the first century men appear, but without their writings. In the second century the writings come to light, but

without the men. How unnatural, says Dr. Christlieb, is this! Who can fail to see that the hypothesis is incredible?

"We invariably find that an age which is fertile in literary productions is followed by a conservative period, in which the productions of the foregoing period are collected and digested—first the classical, then the post-classical. Does the second century, in other respects, bear the impress of a productive classical period in literature? On the contrary, its undoubted products breathe a spirit which bears the same relation to the New Testament writings as does the tenour of a post-classical age bear to that of the age preceding it. Did these writings, especially the Fourth Gospel, belong to 'unknown' authors, they would be perfectly inexplicable phenomena as compared with all the other products of that period. It has been well said that it were no less absurd to ascribe the most inspiriting writings of Luther to the spiritless period of the Thirty Years' War, than to transfer the Gospel of John to the middle of the second century."[1]

"Notwithstanding their warm Christian life, the writings of the second century evince such a

[1] Dr. Christlieb, p. 541.

remarkable dearth of new ideas that one plainly sees how, after the spiritual flood-tides of the first century, the ebb had set in." [1]

"Compare, for instance, the clear and sober-minded spirit of the New Testament epistles, or the quiet sublimity of the Gospel of John, with the epistles of Ignatius, the enthusiasm of which degenerates into a well-nigh fanatic desire for martyrdom; or with the Pastor of Hermas, and the value ascribed by him to ascetic rigour; or with the epistles by Clement of Rome, which tell the fable of the phœnix as a fact; or, again, with the Epistle of Barnabas, which delights in insipid allegories, and gives the most absurd typical interpretations of the Old Testament, justifying Neander's remark, that here we encounter quite another spirit than that of an apostolic man." [2]

Our author produces such a mass of evidence from the early writers, confirmatory of the truths of the Gospel, that his criticism tends to opposite conclusions. Supposing he can prove that the canon of Scripture is not *un*assailable, he has not accomplished much. It is of more value to have confirmation of the facts and principles of Divine truth, than to be assured that the authorship,

[1] Dr. Christlieb, p. 541. [2] Ibid. p. 541.

construction, compilation, or arrangement of the Scriptures, are just what the Church of Rome authoritatively pronounced. Because we cannot positively settle certain questions of little comparative importance, are we to surrender our faith in essentials? Are we to let the conjectures and queries of German cavillers, with their "Yea, hath God said," destroy our cherished faith and hope? God forbid! It is not the preservation or infallibility of the apostolic writings which makes His incarnation, death, and resurrection, facts in the history of our race. The facts make the history, not the history the facts. Europe was saved from Oriental despotism by Leonidas at Thermopylæ, and the valour and patriotism of the Greeks; by Charles Martel in the eighth century; and again by Prince Eugene in the seventeenth century; but it is not because history has truly or imperfectly recorded these facts that we enjoy to this day the great benefits resulting to civilisation from their heroism.

The truth of Christianity does not, at all events, rest on the *quotations of the early Fathers*, and our author would have accomplished but little had he proved that there were none found. In the first ages of the Church, when the events were fresh,

the voice of the preacher was the channel which conveyed the saving gospel to the souls of men, and there was not the same necessity for reference to the written records as in after times. When a century had elapsed after the death of Christ, then the records of the first disciples became of importance. They then came into prominence, and were abundantly quoted, as our author acknowledges. As time went on that importance increased, and about three hundred years after the events the Emperor Constantine ordered Eusebius to have fifty copies of the Holy Scriptures fairly inscribed on parchment, the use whereof he tells Eusebius he "knew to be absolutely necessary to the Church." Eusebius gives us the emperor's entire letter. They were not so absolutely necessary when most of the Fathers wrote whom our author has referred to. *I* do not want any written record to prove to me that the Spaniards in the Peninsular War, seventy years ago, poisoned the bread of the British troops. I lived in my youth with an old Christian soldier and his wife who were in the campaign, and used to amuse me with their experience of such facts, as we sat round the fire on a winter's evening. Nor of the American War of Independence do the people

of the present generation depend entirely on writings or books for the proof that it took place. Two lives reach from date to date, and no evidence can be stronger than such.

Until we have better reason than our author has adduced for altering our estimate of these sacred writings, so often assailed, but maintaining serenely, century after century, their high pretensions as a message from heaven to culture our moral and spiritual nature, and guide us thither, we should be foolish, oh, how foolish! to question their authority or neglect their guidance. Because we cannot be sure that the Bible is in every detail the perfect transcript of Divine revelation, we are to abandon the only solace that humanity possesses, the only theory which accounts for the wickedness which, without its teaching, is such an anomaly to all else in creation, the only bond which binds society in brotherhood, and makes social existence capable of including happiness here, or the hope of life hereafter. Better a misunderstood revelation than none at all. Better a glimpse of immortality, than the negation which is utter darkness, and makes the issue of existence only death.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE.

"*Hoist with his own petard.*"

CHAPTER VI.

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE.

WE now come to the question of contemporary evidence. Our author says the testimony of the New Testament in favour of the miraculous is inadequate because it is not contemporary. I have to endeavour to show that he has himself proved it to be contemporary.

The "Spectator" describes him as virtually saying: It is as if you tried to prove some unheard-of facts of the civil war in the time of Charles I. by testimony not to be traced higher than the reign of George III. I say we trace the testimony to one of Cromwell's own officers, and our author's own criticism shall be shown to prove it.

I take one piece of evidence of his own which he has elaborately presented. I compare it with proofs of the same kind from other sources. I refer to the authorities specified, and I accept it

and endorse it. But I make a different use of it. He uses it to prove that because John, the apostle, wrote the Apocalypse, he cannot have written the Fourth Gospel. I use it to prove that because John wrote the Apocalypse *the facts of the Gospel are by contemporary testimony substantiated;* and I contend that this evidence—clear, direct, and irrefragable—neutralises his main argument and the object of his book, which is to invalidate supernatural religion and the reality of Divine revelation.

He says (on page 392 of his second volume): "The external evidence that the Apostle John wrote the Apocalypse is more ancient than that for the authorship of any other book of the New Testament, excepting some of the epistles of Paul. Justin Martyr affirms in the clearest and most positive manner the apostolic origin of the work. He speaks to Tryphon of a certain man whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation made to him, of the Millennium and subsequent general resurrection. The genuineness of this testimony is not called in question by any one."

"As another most important point we may mention that there is probably not another work

of the New Testament the precise date of the composition of which, within a very few weeks, can be so positively affirmed. No result of criticism rests upon a more secure basis, and is now more universally accepted by all competent critics than the fact that the Apocalypse was written A.D. 68, 69. The writer distinctly and repeatedly mentions his name. 'The revelation of Jesus Christ . . . unto his servant John. John to the seven Churches which are in Asia;' and he states that the work was written in the island of Patmos, where he was 'on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus'" (p. 395).

"It is clear that the writer counted fully upon being generally known under the simple designation of John; and when we consider the unmistakable terms of authority with which he addresses the seven Churches, it is scarcely possible to deny that the writer either was the apostle, or, distinctly desired to assume his personality" (p. 397).

"The whole description (of the New Jerusalem) is a mere allegory of the strongest Jewish dogmatic character, and it is of singular value for the purpose of identifying the author" (p. 399).

"There is no internal evidence whatever against

the supposition that the 'John' who announces himself as the author of the Apocalypse was the apostle. On the contrary, the tone of authority adopted throughout, and evident certainty that his identity would everywhere be recognised, denote a position in the Church which no other person of the name of John could possibly have held at the time when the Apocalypse was written. The external evidence, therefore, which indicates that Apostle John as the author is quite in harmony with the internal testimony of the book itself" (p. 402).

I have quoted sufficient to show that our author, whose object is to discredit the Fourth Gospel, elaborately and successfully proves that John the Apostle wrote the Apocalypse.

There is other testimony to prove this, easily got at, besides what our author supplies.

Sir Isaac Newton long ago fixed upon the year 68 as the date.

Dr. Davidson says: "We should despair of proving the authenticity of any New Testament book by the help of ancient witnesses, if that of the Apocalypse be rejected."

In the present quarter's "Edinburgh Review" (October 1874) there is a remarkable confirmation

of the importance I am attaching to the Apocalypse as a book written by the Apostle John during the nine months' reign of the Emperor Galba, that is, between May 1, 68, and January 15, 69. The writer of the article, which is a review of Rénan's "Antichrist," says: "The arguments which support the assignment of A.D. 68 as the date of its composition are absolutely irresistible." And he adds: "Here we have a book the date of which is positively ascertained, and the writer almost certainly known, while its contents are of a prophetic character, and lay claim (in a marked manner) to inspiration, yet are so peculiarly historical in their character, and deal with a period of history so perfectly well known down to its minutest details, that it can be checked and verified at every turn. Might we not almost say that we have here (as in the Book of Daniel) a *gauge* by which to measure inspiration, a *sample* by which to understand prophecy, a *key* for a full comprehension of what Holy Scripture is and means?"

The Apocalypse is, as our author describes it, an ecstatic and dogmatic allegory. What it is besides, which the believer in Divine inspiration would include in the definition, is out of the range

of such a critic's comprehension, and he would not be likely to attach much importance to the words, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the *things which shall be hereafter*." But he seems to have overlooked how much essential evangelical doctrine it expresses, and how much it is imbued with its spirit; that it testifies to the resurrection of Christ and the atonement. Although it *is* an allegory, its author could no more have written it, if he had known nothing of those doctrines, than Bunyan could have written "The Pilgrim's Progress," or Milton "Paradise Lost" and "Regained." By proving John to be the author of this "highly dogmatic treatise," as he calls the Apocalypse, he takes us to the essence of the dogmas. They must have either been in existence before John wrote it, or he invented them, for they are certainly there.

He seems unconsciously to have furnished the very contemporary evidence which such critics as himself pretend *not* to have found, and profess they require, before they can accept the miracles and evangelical doctrines of the gospel.

He allows that Matthew was an *eye-witness*, but denies that he wrote of *miracles*. He allows that

Paul wrote of *miracles*, but he was *not* an *eye-witness*.

Now John both saw them and wrote of them, for he was the son of Zebedee, and he wrote the Apocalypse. This being proved, we have in it, from him, as an eye-witness of the miracles of Jesus, evidence which confirms the Gospels. The vision is from Him "*who liveth and was dead;*" *the first begotten of the dead,*" *who cometh with clouds*, and to one who was "*in the spirit on the Lord's day.*"

It as evidently presupposes the miraculous facts of the Gospels, and is supplementary to them, as certainly as it presupposes the prophecies of the Old Testament, and supplements the predictions of Daniel.

The allegory of "a Lamb as it had been slain," which is prominent in the vision, is unmistakable. No critic could be so perverse as to deny that this plainly indicates that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and that His death is referred to as a sacrifice for sin in fulfilment of the ancient types and sacrificial rites; nor can it be doubted that the same is in harmony with the gospel which Paul preached and wrote about in his absolutely unquestionable epistles, to which alone we refer,

avoiding, for obvious reasons, allusion to the Acts of the Apostles, as our author seems to ignore that book altogether.

Let us turn to the sublime words of this Apocalypse, proved to have been written by John the Apostle, and as we read, imagine, if we can, that the author himself, and the Christians of the seven Churches of Asia and elsewhere, knew nothing of the miraculous facts of the Gospels and the doctrine of the atonement with which they are inseparably connected; and imagine, if we can, that they were both added, according to our author's hypothesis, to the original and lost Gospels a century later. It is entitled "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must *shortly come to pass*."

Among such things—"shortly to come to pass"—affecting the Church, we cannot be wrong in understanding the attack upon Jerusalem by the Romans to be included. If so, the saying of the angel—"Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein," implies that Jerusalem was still standing when the book was written. Also, among the things shortly to come to pass, must be understood the

impending judgments on Rome (the mystical Babylon) for the terrible and bloody persecution which had lately happened; for Rome is evidently referred to in the seventeenth chapter, where we read: "Upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great; and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus." We are left in no uncertainty as to the interpretation of this chapter, for it is given us in the last verse, where we are told—"And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. *And there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is* not yet come." It is all but certain that the kings referred to are—1 Augustus, 2 Tiberius, 3 Caligula, 4 Claudius, 5 Nero, and the 6th, "*which now is*," Galba, who reigned nine months, from 1st May, 68, till 15th January, 69; the 7th, to come next, being Otho, who, when he cometh, must continue a short space. It was but "a short space," for on the 20th of April in the same year Vespasian ascended the throne. The beast which was to appear next is undoubtedly Nero; for though he was dead, Tacitus tells us there was a wide-

spread rumour, which created great alarm, that the report of his having committed suicide, when the senate had denounced him, was false. He is said to have been personified by a slave, who took up his abode in an island not far from Patmos. When we think of the Roman coins of that date having on them the words "Nero Cæsar," the Hebrew letters for which are identical with the "six hundred threescore and six," the number of the beast, which "he that hath understanding is to count," we cannot avoid the conclusion that Nero, under the symbol of a beast, is referred to.

If this be the correct interpretation, there is no uncertainty about the date and authorship of the book.

The preface or title closes with the words, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for *the time is at hand.*" And then the book opens with an apostolic salutation to the Churches, and a fervent ascription of praise to Jehovah, and to the risen and exalted Messiah and Redeemer.

"John to the seven Churches which are in Asia (Churches planted by Paul years before): Grace

unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." (To be "in the spirit on the Lord's day" is in harmony with evangelical Christianity, and quite meaningless apart from it. The first day of the week is, undoubtedly, called the Lord's day, because on that day He rose from the dead; and bread has been broken and wine drunk on that day, in obedience to His commands, and in remembrance of His death, ever since the day of Pentecost.)

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hades and of death."

"The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of

David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof."

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . a Lamb as it had been slain; and they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches," &c.

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

"These are they that came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

There is nothing in the Fourth Gospel, nor in any other part of Scripture, that more emphatically proclaims the Godhead of Jesus Christ than

this worship of Him by the whole host of heaven. The whole creation, as twice described in the second commandment, fall down and worship Him. It is identical with the language Paul uses in his letter to the Philippians: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every *knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father."

This sort of language pervades the whole book. The allegory of a Lamb slain to wash away sin by the shedding of His blood occurs a score times.

It is not possible to read it and believe what our author insinuates. He wants some proof that the four Gospels are not religious romances written long after the events occurred which they record. I point out that the author has the proof in his own argument that John wrote the Apocalypse, and that the evidence therein given to the miracles is not affected by any uncertainty whether the Gospels were produced by eye-witnesses, or constructed on second-hand evidence, by such disciples as Mark and Luke.

No criticism ever questions that Paul preached

a miraculous gospel, or ever doubts the genuineness of certain of his epistles in which the doctrines are fully stated.

There are, at least, four which have never been questioned — viz., the First of Thessalonians, written about the year 50; the Epistle to the Galatians, A.D. 52; the First of Corinthians, A.D. 57; and the one to the Romans, A.D. 58; and in all those letters the miracles and doctrines are referred to which, years before, when he first went forth to preach, were the themes of his ministry. His insight into spiritual matters increased as he grew older, as his later writings indicate; but from first to last it was the same gospel.

He writes to the Corinthians in the year 57, to remind them of the gospel he had preached unto them. He says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Peter, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Now as

Paul's written version of the gospel at this time was in the main identical with John's, we get from the evidence that John wrote the Apocalypse a very definite conclusion.

It has been absurdly suggested by John Stuart Mill, and others,[1] that Paul originated the dogmatic doctrines of Christianity. Now we know that Paul, in the early years of his ministry, communicated with James, Peter, and John, at Jerusalem, respecting that gospel which he was preaching among the Gentiles; for he writes to that effect in his unquestioned epistle to the Galatians, and tells them that when "those three apostles, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to him, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship." Would John and Peter and James have done this if the miraculous gospel Paul told them he was preaching was inconsistent with their own knowledge of the circumstances and events in Christ's life of which they were all eye-witnesses?

We have John writing a book before the destruction of Jerusalem, and Paul an epistle before the reign of Nero, and they both bear testimony to

[1] "Nothing can be more false than the fashionable notion of our day that Paul was the author of Christianity. The true founder of Christianity was Jesus."—*Rénan* ("The Apostles," p. 3).

the fact that Jesus was the Messiah of Jewish prophecy, who descended into our world to be its Saviour and Redeemer by the sacrifice of His life on the cross—His miraculous resurrection from the dead being the attestation of His atoning work, while His promise to come again to earth in like manner as He was seen to go away, they both relied upon with implicit confidence.

As early as the year 52 Paul writes from Corinth to the Thessalonians, reminding them "how they turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come;"[1] and he charges them by the Lord that this epistle be read in all the Churches in Macedonia.[2] Its genuineness has never been questioned.

Thus it is quite certain that Paul, at the commencement and throughout his ministry, preached the dogmatic doctrines of the Divinity of Christ, the resurrection, the atonement, the depravity of human nature, justification by faith, and the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the souls of men, which constituted the Christianity of the first three centuries, and undoubtedly emanated

[1] 1 Thess. i. 9. [2] Ibid. i. 27.

—not from the depths of Paul's moral consciousness, but from the events, Divine utterances, and superhuman circumstances which were the theme of the earliest Christian records.[1] The Apocalypse is absolute proof as to how they originated, and that they were prevalent when it was written.

This, I contend, is sound argument, and neutralises that of our author. Other objections of cavillers have their appropriate answers. They may say that the eye-witnesses might honestly believe and teach, but were deceived. No one would, I think, say they were dishonest, and invented the miracles. It may be said that a single eye-witness such as John is insufficient. But if a jury has *one* such, and all the circumstantial evidence in the case supports his testimony, the verdict is easily arrived at. A tree that is grafted usually yields fruit after the process, not before; but we have here this tree of Christianity proved to be fully developed in the year 68, and its fruit described, and we are asked to believe that it was grafted to bear its evangelical dogmas a century afterwards! The fact is that the same apostle, who describes its fruit in the year 68, was present

[1] Paul tells the Thessalonians he is thankful that they received what he preached as the word of God, not as the word of men.

when it was planted, and we know from his evidence that the tree needed no grafting to produce such fruit.

This evidence, from a hostile critic of such ability and scholarship, to the authenticity and authorship of the book of Revelation, is surely of considerable value. As Professor Owen could, from a single bone of a fossil animal, show what the whole was of which the bone formed a part, so might be used this evidence that John wrote the Apocalypse.

The Christian apologist may show our author his own argument, and pointing out the word *Apocalypse*, exclaim, "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word!" *Thou art hoist with thine own petard!*

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

"The final and surest proof of the actuality and Divine origin of revelation is its manifestation in individuals, as a healing, sin-constraining power, diffusing everywhere light and life."

Christlieb.

"The most important controversies are those which a man finds in his own heart."

J. A. Bengel.

"The Key to Scripture is the Person and Office of Messiah."

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

AT the close of his work our author attempts to console his readers for having demolished their evangelical belief in the following eloquent language:—

"In surrendering its miraculous element and its claims to supernatural origin, therefore, *the religion of Jesus* does not lose its virtue, or the qualities which have made it a blessing to humanity. It sacrifices none of that elevated character which has distinguished and raised it above all human systems; it merely relinquishes a claim which it has shared with all antecedent religions, and severs its connection with ignorant superstition. It is too divine in its morality to require the aid of miraculous attributes. No supernatural halo can heighten its spiritual beauty, and no mysticism deepen its holiness.

In its perfect simplicity it is sublime, and in its profound wisdom it is eternal" (p. 489).

This may be eloquently expressed, but it will not bear analysis. If "the religion of Jesus" has an "*elevated character*," which has "*distinguished and raised it above all human systems*," it must have a superhuman "*elevated character*," and, if so, a supernatural *character*, and, therefore, the religion of Jesus is a *supernatural religion*. To take from the Bible all that is miraculous, and pretend it would "*not lose its virtue*," or "*the qualities which have made it a blessing to humanity*," is simply absurd. The teachings of Christ, apart from His recognition of Abraham's faith in God having spoken to him; of Moses, as divinely commissioned to give the law of Sinai; and of David, to prophesy of Himself as the Messiah, is inconceivable. It is not possible to strike out of the Bible all that is supernatural and leave it intelligible. What would be left, far from being "perfect simplicity and profound and eternal wisdom," would be, for religious instruction, indeed, a blank.

Knowing what human nature is and has been in all ages, where, we may ask, could such perfect and sublime morality have come from apart from

Divine interference? As Henry Rogers says in his recent work, "The Superhuman Origin of the Bible inferred from itself," "*The Bible is not such a book as man would have made if he could, or could have made if he would.*"

Even John Stuart Mill, in his book just published, describes Christ as the "pattern of perfection for humanity;" and "a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching."

The late Dr. Priestley, the eminent Unitarian, said that the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ is more authentically attested than any other fact in history.[1]

The fact is, in short, just this: the whole Scripture testimony to the work of man's redemption is, to the believer, explicit and harmonious, while the emasculated and perverted creed of the moralist who rejects the miraculous is sheer confusion and absurdity.

We appreciate the admonition of the apostle Paul, where he says: "Oh, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, so

[1] See his work, "Matter and Spirit," p. 247.

called, which, some professing, have erred concerning the faith."

It is of importance to note that the writings which record the deaths of some of the principal persons, such as John the Baptist, James the Apostle, and Stephen, would, probably, have mentioned the decease of others if they had died before the books were composed. Supposing they originated at a later date, the writers would have had no motive for omitting any such particulars. Surely, the Acts of the Apostles would have told us of the death of Paul and Peter, Matthew and Barnabas, and the other men whose doings it records. If we imagine the book a fiction, then, we ask, where are the stories which apocryphal books contain, such as the crucifixion of Peter, which would, certainly, have been included? This must be accounted for before we set aside the book as not history, but fiction.

This anonymous sceptical work has to encounter the damaging objection that it enters a verdict before the case is complete. The judge, that is, impartial criticism holding the balance evenly, may justly say, How can the verdict be pronounced in the absence of witnesses of such importance as the Acts of the Apostles and the

epistles of Paul? The final reflections at the conclusion of the second volume are premature. Instead of it being "right not to delay a clear statement of what the author believes to be the truth and its consequences," it is the opposite; and we venture to predict that, when he has done his worst, when he has made the most of the silence of primitive writers whose works time has reduced to fragments; when he has fully exposed the irrelevancy of many of the assertions of over-sanguine apologists (such as Tischendorf and Canon Westcott); when he has magnified to the utmost the difficulties inseparable from the investigation of matters eighteen centuries distant, between which period in history and the present time there have intervened revolutions in nations, invasions of barbarians, cities burned, libraries destroyed, and all that is conceivable of obliteration, falsification, fraud, and superstition, in what are called the dark ages—his ability, learning, research, and logic will not have convinced the majority of his readers that Christianity is to be placed in the category of the world's religious delusions and impostures. His complete work will be fully replied to by critics of his own calibre and acumen, and the highest

honour it will ultimately attain will be to be relegated to the unenviable position in literature in which are placed Spinoza, Hume, Baur, Strauss, Rénan, Mill, and all those able doubters who have boldly but unsuccessfully assailed the truth as it is in Jesus.

I close with the remark that the Bible is regarded by the Evangelical Protestant Nonconformists from an independent point of view. The authority of the councils of the Popish Church is nothing to them. The decision of the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 364, furnishes evidence of the Holy Scriptures being, in the main, what we esteem them to be; but we do not recognise its authority.

We are in a position to welcome any light which any critic can throw upon the records of Divine revelation, and can be grateful for any laborious research which separates the gold from the dross, and selects the real coin from the counterfeit. But it is undoubtedly true that, as the religion of the Bible is a spiritual matter, it is best discerned by those whose hearts are open to receive it.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."[1] "He

[1] John vii. 17.

that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."[1] "Filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."[2]

On the assumption that man is not a spiritual being, the investigation of what the Bible teaches is not likely to be successful. The most prominent statements will be foolishness. The primary fact that God is a Spirit will not be apprehended, and all analogous doctrines deemed the outgrowth of superstition. It is the vainest of all inquiries from such a foregone conclusion. Man is not placed at such a point of observation in the universe as to be competent to conduct a theological investigation, based on a negative hypothesis, regarding the essential proposition of all religious truth. Among the indispensable requisites in the pursuit of such knowledge, are, the receptive disposition, the listening attitude, the becoming humility, the consciousness of a tendency to go wrong, and of dependence on the Divine illumination of the Holy Spirit. "Blind unbelief is sure to err." The inquirer who does not lay aside pride and self-sufficiency is not in a condition to take the first step. If intellectual power,

[1] 1 John v. 10. [2] Col. i. 9.

acuteness of perception, and the logical faculty, could ensure the successful pursuit of spiritual truth, we may suppose that Satan's knowledge would convince him of the folly of his opposition to the Divine authority. That which intervenes betwixt the Almighty Creator and the fallen angel intercepts the vision of the depraved human soul. Only "the pure in heart can see God." The blindness is not removable until, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, those conditions are complied with which are implied in the statement, "Behold he prayeth." His soul is humbled, his eyes are opened, and he gets nearer to the truth. "The Lord is nigh unto them who call upon him."[1]

The summary of what I have endeavoured to make plain to you respecting the book is briefly this:—

1. That it chiefly consists of German scepticism made plain to English readers; of a recast of the exploded fallacies of Hume; and an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the miraculous from the Gospels.

2. That the assumption that there are in the Bible Satanic miracles, thus putting Jewish super-

[1] Psa. cxlv. 18.

stition on a level with revealed truth, is reasoning on false premises.

3. That the miracles of the Bible do not admit of their being accommodated to the laws of nature, to satisfy the scientific and philosophical theologians.

4. That the objection to the testimony of the first disciples, on the ground of their not being learned, scientific, and critical, has no weight, especially as applied to Paul, whose education would enable him to weigh the evidence of the eye-witnesses, which he would compare with the revelation to himself; and thus he was in a position to know the exact truth.

5. That the abstract argument against miracles not having sufficient force to merit Mr. Arnold's endorsement, its further discussion was not necessary, the first part of the book being sufficiently neutralised.

6. That the argument from the silence of early Church writers is not conclusive, because we have only fragments of their writings, and that there was not the same need to refer to written records while tradition was fresh.

7. That the objection to a quotation because it is not verbatim is frivolous.

8. That the hypothesis that the original records of Christ's life, which are not our Gospels, and are lost, did not contain any miracles, is a German conjecture, which is totally unsupported and absolutely incredible.

9. That the assumption of uniform and verbal inspiration is not an essential of orthodox views, and that Christianity has been more damaged by its friends than its enemies.

10. That the author's mode of presenting his facts is not to be relied upon, any more than his conclusions.

11. That offensive epithets and unwarrantable boldness of assertion do not strengthen his arguments; nor is eloquent language always sense.

12. That the question is not whether the Gospels establish the reality of miracles, so that Christianity is false if they do not sufficiently do so; but is the general evidence, resting on a great variety of proofs, sufficient to prove it true?

13. That special pleading is found throughout the book.

14. That whatever information is wanting, as to the exact manner in which the four Gospels were compiled—whatever probability there may be that Matthew's is made up of materials from seve-